Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

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Afghanistan

In an address to the nation reported by Kabul radio, Najibollah stated: "As a result of the UN process to establish a transitional government in Kabul, I will transfer all executive power and authority to the transitional government on the first day of the transitional period," and this transitional government will "guarantee full respect for human rights and organize free and just elections to create an elected government in Afghanistan."

Lebanon

The Islamic Jihad Organization claimed responsibility for the bombing of Israel's Buenos Aires embassy and said that the operation was carried out by "an Argentine who had converted to Islam," Voice of the Oppressed stated. The foreign minister warned that "any hostile Israeli action" will impede regional peace efforts, Beirut radio reported, citing REUTER.

Iran

The embassy in Buenos Aires "categorically denied" charges which are part of a "vicious campaign" linking Tehran to the bombing of Israel's embassy in Argentina, IRNA reported.

Iraq

Iran's agreement to give refuge to Iraqi aircraft during Operation Desert Storm was "followed by a chapter of treason and treachery" and "part of a prepared plan," INA noted in reporting remarks from an interview with the prime minister carried on Iraqi television. The agency, citing AL-THAWRAH, criticized Britain's "insistence on antagonizing Iraq." INA, citing BABIL, announced the establishment of the Iraqi Green Party "under the umbrella of party pluralism in Iraq."

Israel

"Our relationship with the U.S. Administration is a serious problem that is inflicting extensive and mortal damage on Israel," and "what is most threatening is that its security and well-being are being dangerously damaged in the process," a HA'ARETZ commentary observed. The U.S. refusal to support loan guarantees is a "callous statement about the place Israel occupies today in the U.S. global outlook," the commentary continued. A YEDI'OT AHARONOT editorial added: "Our relations with the United States have deteriorated to an unprecedented low."

Palestinian Affairs

'Arafat convened an "emergency" meeting of the Fatah Central Committee, which decided to begin implementing the proposed confederation with Jordan, AKHBAR AL-USBU' noted. The head of the PLO Political Department stated that this confederation will be established only after the Palestinian and Jordanian peoples hold a referendum on it, and after an "independent Palestinian state" is established, Algiers Voice of Palestine reported, citing AL-FAJR.

Jordan

Amman television termed as "unfair" and "hasty" the "strange" Saudi reaction to King Husayn's charge that Riyadh had funded Jordanian fundamentalists.

Pakistan

The minister of state for foreign affairs praised Najibollah's willingness to step down as president and said that this will "greatly facilitate" transferring power to an "Islamic interim government," Islamabad radio observed. A Foreign Office spokesman denied in "categorical terms" that Islamabad is engaged in acquiring chemical or biological weapons, the radio continued.

India

The visiting president of Kyrgyzstan offered to sell New Delhi enriched uranium "subject to international safeguards," Delhi radio stated.

Algeria

The Higher State Committee chairman announced that "many" detainees will be released before 4 April, Algiers radio reported.

Sudan

"Informed military sources" claimed that the Army is in control of Torit, the headquarters of Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) leader Garang, but SPLA officials denied this, London AL-HAYAH stated. The leader of the SPLA's breakaway wing said that there is "no evidence" of Iranian or Ethiopian forces fighting alongside the government, the paper continued.

Palestinian Affairs

Fatah Agrees to Confederation With Jordan

'Distinguished Relations' Cited

JN1903095192 Amman AKHBAR AL-USBU' in Arabic 19 Mar 92 p 1

["Exclusive" report]

[Text] Amman—AKHBAR AL-USBU' has learned that Yasir 'Arafat, president of the state of Palestine, will arrive in Amman on Saturday, 21 March. He will head a Palestinian delegation comprising a number of PLO Executive Committee members on a visit to Jordan scheduled to last for several days.

AKHBAR AL-USBU' has learned from informed Palestinian sources that during his visit to Amman 'Arafat will seek to study the preliminary steps needed to clarify future relations and the implementation of the various phases involved in a confederation between Jordan and the PLO. These phases were agreed upon during meetings held in recent weeks between Palestinian leaders and Jordanian officials.

AKHBAR AL-USBU' also learned that Yasir 'Arafat convened an emergency meeting of the 17-member Fatah Central Committee on 17 March [date as published] in Tunis. During the meeting, which lasted for several days, a thorough discussion of such a confederation was carried out and a decision was made to proceed with implementing it in light of recent Palestine National Council resolutions emphasizing the distinguished relations with Jordan.

In addition, AKHBAR AL-USBU' learned that 'Arafat briefed the Central Committee on current developments within the Arab and international arenas. He also reviewed the various international resolutions and said that he supports the establishment of a confederation. He highly praised Jordan's position and its sincere and responsible support for legitimate Palestinian rights. The Central Committee members blessed this step and wished it success.

AKHBAR AL-USBU' also learned that in light of the statements made by the U.S. Administration praising Jordan's important role in the peace process, His Majesty King Husayn discussed in detail with the U.S. Administration the legitimate Palestinian rights and the need to provide international protection to the Palestinians.

PLO's Qaddumi Urges Referendum

LD1803202492 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1602 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Text] Brother Abu-Lutf [Faruq Qaddumi], head of the PLO Political Department, has announced that a Palestinian-Jordanian confederation will only be set up after the two peoples hold a referendum and after the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

In an interview with the Jerusalem paper AL-FAJR, brother Abu-Lutf stated that raising the issue of the confederation is definitely a negative intention on the part of some people, particularly at this stage in which the negotiations are marking time.

Brother Abu-Lutf also said that the idea of a confederation is a decision adopted by the Palestine National Council on the basis of the distinguished relations between the Jordanian and Palestinian peoples. Such a step will be completed after the two fraternal peoples hold a referendum and after an independent Palestinian state is established.

Algeria

'Many' Detainees To Be Released by 'Id

LD1803213492 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1700 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Excerpt] Many detainees at the security camps in the south will be released before 'Id al-Fitr [festival celebrating the end of Ramadan, before 4 April]. This was stated by Mr. Mohamed Boudiaf in an interview recorded in Algiers to be broadcast tonight by FR3 TV, a French television station.

The detainees are receiving their parents, and families have already been permitted a certain number of visits. A delegation from the International Red Cross will visit them on Saturday. [passage omitted]

Further on Attacks Against Security Officials

Two Policemen Killed in Boufarik

LD1803230192 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Text] Another assassination attempt against security men took place two days ago. Two more policemen were killed yesterday in the capital. Their bodies were found this morning at Sidi Moussa. This follows the killing of two policemen at Boufarik following an operation carried out by an unknown armed group. Nacera Aid Saleh reports:

[Begin recording] [Saleh] Abdelnacer Sirah, 29, and Dahach Abdelkader, 32, were in a security patrol in Boufarik when they were brutally attacked by an armed group. After killing the two policemen the attackers beat one of the them until his skull was crushed.

[Unidentified official] Opposite the stadium the policemen were taken by surprise by a car behind them carrying unknown persons who fired at their patrol car. The police car then struck a light pole. The assailants then stopped and after making sure that the security members were dead, they pulled them out of their car and finished them off in an brutal and cold-blooded manner.

It is worth pointing out that on the same day at 2000, immediately after the breaking of the fast, unknown persons carried out an assassination attempt near Blida against the driver of a car belonging to the justice services. The driver, who was in the car with his wife and children, died immediately. [end recording]

Policeman Killed in Ksar el-Boukhari

LD1903001592 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Excerpt] We have learned about the assassination of a policeman and his son yesterday at Ksar el-Boukhari an hour before sunset as the policeman was returning home. Ahmed Megaache reports:

[Megaache] Five bullets were emptied into the head of an auxiliary policeman in the police criminal investigation department. His son was also killed. Two daughters who were in the back seat of the car escaped.

The assassination was carried out by an unknown person armed with an automatic weapon. The assassination took place here, opposite the new house of the two victims, in an isolated construction area on the outskirts of Ksar el-Boukhari while the victim and his three children returned home in their car an hour before the sunset call to prayer. [passage omitted] [video shows correspondent outside victim's home]

Youths Attack Constantine Police

LD1803222492 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1730 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Report by Hayat Bouzidi]

[Text] This morning the police station at the western passenger terminal in Constantine came under armed attack by four fundamentalist youths aged between 21 and 22, according to official sources.

According to the same sources, the goal of this attack was to obtain firearms for attacks against the security forces. The security forces were able, however, to foil this attack. After these youths were chased pursued one of them was arrested inside a tin shack. He carried a revolver. The others managed to escape in the direction of the industrial area bordering the wadi, leaving behind their weapons—a revolver, a machine gun, and a cleaver—inside one of the buildings.

Following the interrogation of the arrested man his partners were identified. One of them was detained by the security forces after he participated in the events that took place in the Bentellis quarter.

We point out that this armed attack on the police station at the Constantine passenger terminal resulted in no casualties apart from minor wounds suffered by one policeman during the confrontation. The wilaya security forces are carrying out an investigation into the young men's motivation. [video shows correspondent outside Constantine police station]

Minister 'Surprised' by Journalist's Arrest

LD1803195592 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Text] We now contact Mr. Aboubakr Belkaid [minister of culture and liaison] directly. Mr. Aboubakr Belkaid, our colleague Abderrahmane Mahmoudi is in prison. How did you receive this news?

[Belkaid] I was greatly surprised by the arrest of Mr. Mahmoudi, the director of a weekly newspaper. I am concerned by this extreme measure to deal with the issue of a journalist overstepping the bounds.

I do not want this to be understood as a deliberate action by the state authorities against the freedom of the press in our country. If you will allow me, I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that the government, as always, will honor its commitment to protect and consolidate the freedom of the press. The government considers freedom of the press one of today's democratic gains in our country. The government also believes that a modern government needs a free and responsible press, just as it also needs a strong and credible judicial system.

Ultimately, I hope that, God willing, Mr. Mahmoudi will be released very soon. I also hope that he will rejoin his colleagues and his family very soon.

[Announcer] Mr. Aboubakr Belkaid, it is said that the crisis between the judiciary and the press is due to the information law. Do you not think that this action resulted from the loopholes in the information law, which journalists consider to be penurious?

[Belkaid] Sister, I think that the problem lies more in the application of the law than the law itself. I think that on one hand this case concerns behavior, and on the other hand, if the law has shortcomings then it is possible to discuss and examine it until we formulate an effective law which serves the freedom of the press on the one hand and respects justice on the other.

Anyway, if there is a shortcoming in that law, we will take this opportunity to examine it again and to study it again until we have in our country a law which, as I said, serves the freedom of the press and also serves the country's public interest.

[Announcer] Mr. Aboubakr Belkaid, there are those who say that this case is an attempt to impose silence when talk began about the bribery file.

[Belkaid] There is no connection at all between the two. The government believes that this is an extreme case which was handled by a judge in a well-publicized court case, and that this has nothing at all to do with opening the file that you mentioned.

[Announcer] Mr. Aboubakr Belkaid, we hope to see you soon as a guest at the radio station in order to discuss information and culture. Thank you.

[Belkaid] It is my pleasure, and thank you.

Classes Resume at Constantine University

LD1503120392 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1730 GMT 14 Mar 92

[Text] Normal activities resumed at Constantine's university today after a 10-day break caused by the latest disturbances there. The university's Movement To Protect the People's Choice has refrained from beginning an open strike as a means of having its demands met. Here are more details from our colleague Souad Bathina in Constantine:

[Bathina] Classes resumed at Ain el-Bey University this morning as expected, particularly following the latest communique by the university council which stipulated the resumption of classes on 14 March 1992 for the university's various central institutes. The resumption came after an approximately 10-day break caused by the latest disturbances at the university.

It is worth mentioning that the movement which calls itself the Movement To Protect the People's Choice emphasized in a communique its reversal of its decision to begin an open strike as an essential means to achieve its demands, and its decision to use other means of protest, the nature of which it did not reveal, as a substitute. It also asked the university council to pronounce all rulings made against striking students as null and void and to release all detainees, be they students or lecturers.

Therefore, at this moment everything at Constantine University is normal except for the security measure of checking student identification cards at the campus entrance.

Official Denies Government To Print More Money

LD1603073892 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1730 GMT 15 Mar 92

[Text] Minister Delegate for Budget Murad Medrasi denied today in an interview with the national radio station that the government will resort to printing more money and stated that efforts will be made to avert additional pressure on general inflation.

As for the financial cleansing of institutions, Medrasi made it clear that during the first three months of this year more than 17 billion dinars have been spent out of the 42 billion dinars earmarked for cleansing institutions.

Egypt

Mubarak, Syria's al-Asad Hold Press Briefing

NC1803125892 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1140 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Text] Cairo, 18 Mar (MENA)—Presidents Husni Mubarak and Hafiz al-Asad met this morning and afterward held a news conference.

At the beginning of the news conference, President Mubarak said that the talks dealt with interesting topics, including the peace issue, and that he and President al-Asad exchanged views on various matters.

President Mubarak added that he could not comment on the outcome of the talks, but would answer specific questions on particular matters.

President Mubarak said: When we talk about the peace issue, and Israel's inflexibility or intransigence regarding progress in the peace process, I would like to say that we

should continue the talks until it is unequivocally clear that Israel does not want peace. The Israelis say they want peace, and therefore we should put them in a position which will reveal whether they really want peace. Negotiations are always difficult and can even be fruitless and complicated in the beginning, but we should not despair. We have to continue talks until the end.

Answering a question on the possibility of Egypt and Syria taking part in any military action to implement UN Security Council resolutions concerning the dismantling of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, al-Asad said: We agreed in the region that Iraqi forces should withdraw from Kuwait. With regard to any other matter, we are not prepared to support any military action against Iraq under existing circumstances.

President al-Asad added: As I said, the goal was to liberate Kuwait, or get the Iraqi forces out of Kuwait. This was a necessity which perhaps imposed the military option. But other matters do not necessitate military action, particularly considering that Iraq says it is committed to the UN Security Council resolutions. Frankly, we feel a bit bitter that such a thing does not apply to Israel.

President al-Asad said: We want everyone to implement the Security Council resolutions. The Arabs, the Israelis, and all countries should implement the Security Council resolutions. This is something that I have to say.

President Mubarak praised the development of Egyptian-Syrian relations. He said that the method of action between President al-Asad and himself is based on contacts and direct meetings, either in Egypt or in Syria. He expressed pleasure [words indistinct].

President al-Asad also praised cooperation between Egypt and Syria. He said: This cooperation makes us optimistic about our future as two countries, and about the future of the Arab nation in general. He added: I like would to reiterate my thanks to President Mubarak and greetings to our great people in Egypt, who have recorded the brightest pages in our Arab history, and consequently in human history through this Arab experience.

In reply to a question on the possibility of using military force against Iraq to implement the Security Council resolutions, President Mubarak said: If you want my completely frank opinion, I say that Tariq 'Aziz announced at the Security Council that the Iraqi Government has decided to comply with the UN resolutions. Therefore, I believe that they have to implement these resolutions. As for the use of force and support for this use, we are against it.

The Syrian president was asked to comment on Israel's claim that the explosion at the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires was linked to an Iranian-Syrian axis, and how he views these claims. He replied: In any case, Israel can say whatever it wants. This is the first time that the Syrian axis as a party has extended to South America. He added: I heard the news only today, and thus I cannot comment on it or explain it satisfactorily. There must be someone who is angry at Israel and its actions. I do not know him, his identity, nationality, or religion, nor do I know who carried out the act.

The Syrian president affirmed that Syria has not planned nor will it ever plan such acts. As for Israel, he said, it can say whatever it wants, but what it says is one thing while reality is usually something else.

President Mubarak interrupted to comment on some Israeli radio reports. He said: When the issue of the unauthorized U.S. technology transfer from Israel to other countries unfolded, Israeli radio reported that Egyptian soldiers in the Gulf area collected scattered metal pieces of Patriot missiles and passed them to China and others. We have not heard that Patriot missiles landed near Egyptian soldiers or forces so that they could gather the scattered metal pieces. The desert was full of dispersed metal, and anyone could have collected it, but this is merely propaganda that we do not concern ourselves with.

The Syrian president carried on jokingly that this is a completely convincing self-defense. Egyptian soldiers transferred U.S. technology through missile shrapnel given to China.

On implementing the al-Ta'if Accord, with respect to the Syrian troop withdrawal from Beirut in September, President al-Asad said: We are committed to what is contained in the al-Ta'if Accord, and to what the Lebanese Government wishes. On several occasions in the past we wanted to withdraw from Beirut, and sometimes we did withdraw, but motivated by the need to assist our Lebanese brothers, we were obliged to return to our brothers in Beirut. The al-Ta'if Accord on the one hand, and Lebanon's need on the other, will determine when to withdraw, from where to withdraw, and where to withdraw to.

Asked how he sees the new world order and what effects it has on the peace process, both on the bilateral and multilateral levels, President Mubarak said: The new world order seeks to achieve peace and stability. If this is the objective, the countries concerned must help the Middle East countries attain a just peace, so that the limits to weapons and armaments in the region, including Israel, could then be determined.

Responding to a question on the attempts to punish Libya by issuing a Security Council resolution banning civilian flights to and from Libya and other measures, President Mubarak said: From my point of view, I believe that our people will not accept such severe sanctions against Libya—especially the countries neighboring it, which will be affected by any ban imposed on Libya. Therefore, it is important and necessary that when the Security Council issues a resolution, we should first be aware of the effects of this resolution on neighboring countries. Second, a fair trial must take place and

the evidence proving Libya's involvement in the operations must be very clear to everyone, so that the people of this country and all Arabs know that Libya actually did such a thing, and can be aware of the extent of the crime it committed that made the Security Council impose sanctions.

On this point, President al-Asad agreed with President Mubarak's views and said: When the Security Council issues specific directives, it is necessary that it take into consideration the sentiments of the Arab masses and nation.

Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad said: I do not think that anyone who knows this area, in which Arabs live, will be pleased to learn of the intention to impose a siege upon an Arab country such as Libya. I do not think that this will be happy news to Arabs anywhere. At any rate, we always demand international legitimacy; the implementation of UN resolutions; and combating by reasonable means all actions that are undesirable to us as Arab people and Arab officials, and to the people of the world.

The Syrian president added: What pains us is that the Arab region and the Arab states are the focus of distinctive and concentrated collaboration. No one can disregard this. Of course, we hope that the situation in our area will become more stable. We are seeking peace and we are struggling to achieve peace. We do not want measures that could complicate everything, in which we try to make progress that is not only in our interest but also in the interest of the people of the world.

President al-Asad said: The other countries of the world must take into consideration that we are one Arab nation. Every one influences and is influenced by the others. When I say that we are one nation, this means that we are one people. Therefore, this reality should be taken into consideration and our sentiments should be appreciated, whether negative or positive, according to the type of action or measure taken in an Arab country.

Asked about the fate of the Damascus Declaration one year after it was signed, President Mubarak said: The security in the Gulf is the responsibility of the Gulf states and we do not interfere in the internal affairs of others. As for the Damascus Declaration, there will be a meeting of the foreign ministers of the eight countries at the end of April. Let us wait for the outcome of this meeting, and then we can talk about the seriousness or nonseriousness of the Damascus Declaration.

Answering a question about Syria's position on the demand to postpone the peace talks until after the Israeli elections, President al-Asad said: We dealt extensively with the peace process in our talks. We did not make a decision on what measures or actions could be taken in the coming days or months. We have not reached a decision on the level of each state separately or among us. But we adhere to the peace process and Israel is bound to appear as a state that does not want peace. It has talked about peace, but the falsehood is becoming apparent.

President al-Asad said: I said this on another occasion a few days ago. Israel is the one that does not want peace. We said it long ago, not just now under the so-called new world order, but long ago, at least 20 years ago. We advocated peace, but we have not been convinced at any time that the Israeli rulers want peace. We have embarked on the peace process and it has become clear to the world that the ones who hampered the peace process were the Israeli rulers, and not the Arabs or the Arab rulers.

Al-Asad Meets Arab League Secretary 18 Mar

JN1803203392 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Text] President Hafiz al-Asad received Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, Arab League secretary general, at 1315 today. The meeting was attended by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar'. The talks centered on the situation in the Arab arena.

'Legal Procedures' Taken Against Gen al-Shadhili

NC1703191392 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1708 GMT 17 Mar 92

[Text] Cairo, 17 Mar (MENA)—The military prosecutor stated today that all legal procedures pertaining to the sentence against retired Lieutenant General Sa'd-al-Din al-Shadhili, former Armed Forces chief of staff, were implemented following his return to Cairo last Saturday.

The military prosecutor announced that, in accordance with the law, retired Lt. Gen. Sa'd-al-Din Muhammad Hasan al-Shadhili was informed of the sentence passed against him in absentia in connection with Higher State Security Case Number 2 of 1983. The sentence was three years at hard labor, while guaranteeing all the defendant's legal rights.

The prosecutor added that at his defense counsel's request, a copy of the trial records was handed over, and a request by the defense lawyer to meet the convicted person and to allow his family to visit him. [sentence as received]

The prosecutor asserted that all measures are being implemented in strict legal fashion, with no excesses.

Mosad Reportedly Linked to 'Irradiated Fruit'

NC1903090892 Beirut AL-SHIRA' in Arabic 9 Mar 92 p 39

[Text] Egyptian security forces have foiled a major attempt to smuggle goods from Israel, including quantities of heavily irradiated fruit which could cause cancer.

Investigations reveal that a former Israeli general working for the Mosad is behind these shipments, and he recruited youths to help him transport the exported goods from Israel to Egypt.

Reports indicate that 14 bedouins have been arrested in Sinai, some giving astonishing information that might reveal the existence of a major spying network under the Israeli general, who, since 1978, has had strong ties with Yusuf Wali, secretary general of the ruling National Democratic Party, deputy prime minister, and agriculture minister. This general paid sums of between $20,000 and $50,000 to the bedouins collaborating with him, but paid $70,000 for the last shipment, which was seized.

Investigations show that three of the detainees visited Israel six times, the last in December 1991. A relationship is suspected between them and Israel's Mosad, which goes further than smuggling irradiated fruit.

Additional Arrests Made in Officer's Murder

NC1803164692 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1541 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Text] Cairo, 18 Mar (MENA)—Interior Minister Muhammad 'Abd-al-Halim Musa said that 63 Muslim extremists have been arrested, suspected of being involved in the assassination of police Lieutenant Colonel Ahmad 'Ala'-al-Din in al-Fayyum. He added that whoever the prosecution finds has not been involved will be released immediately.

In a statement today, Musa said that the security authorities will firmly confront any violations of the law.

A group of extremists assassinated Lt. Col. 'Ala'-al-Din on 3 March in the city of al-Fayyum, 100 km south of Cairo.

Libya

Judge Released From Inquest; Replacement Named

LD1903102492 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 0930 GMT 19 Mar 92

[Text] Tripoli, 19 Mar (JANA)—JANA has learned that the General Assembly of the Supreme Court held a meeting last week, in which it discussed the request to release the investigating magistrate Ahmad Tahir al-Zawi from his mission to investigate the case of Pan Am Flight 103 over Scotland on [words indistinct], for the reasons he explained at his news conference on 6 March, which were:

1. The concerned authorities in the United States, United Kingdom, and Scotland did not cooperate in enabling him to see all the papers concerning the case, or to listen to those who had links with the issue.

2. There was no response to his request to carry out the necessary investigations in the aforementioned countries, and to see the minutes on which the charges were based.

3. Radio and television reported this case widely, and used descriptions which were incompatible with the traditions of justice.

4. Officials at home and abroad issued many statements about the case and decided some of the points about it, disregarding the well established traditions and complete independence of the judiciary in the Jamahiriyah, which has always shouldered its work freely and impartially, away from any direct or indirect influence.

5. They insulted the Libyan judiciary and declared to the world that they have no confidence in it, while declaring the judiciary of the other countries above that, which is an accusation my conscience cannot bear.

6. The political pressure from home and abroad to trample on the law, and the attempt to force me to violate it.

7. The agreement on the participation of foreign judges in interrogating ordinary Libyan citizens standing before a Libyan judge in their own country is another insult to the Libyan judiciary which I cannot accept. Do I have the right to interrogate in their own countries Americans or Britons who have committed actions against Libya which are prohibited by the Libyan law? Particularly as the matter is merely slander or suspicion, because nothing has been presented proving otherwise about these citizens.

8. The psychological terrorism exerted every day and every week, such as the false announcement that the accused had escaped or been executed.

9. Not respecting Libyan procedural law and not respecting Libya as an independent sovereign state recognized by the United Nations.

The General Assembly has decided to accept his resignation for those reasons. JANA has learned that a resolution has been adopted, after coordination with brother Maaouiya Ould Sidi Ahmed Taya, Arab Maghreb Union [AMU] president, to delegate the case of the crash of Pan Am Flight 103 to Judge Salim Muhammad, member of the AMU judicial institution, because of his judicial expertise and competence. JANA has also learned that he has actually commenced this job.

UN Members Contacting Libya on Resolution

LD1903105592 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 2045 GMT 19 Mar 92

[Text] Tripoli, 19 Mar (JANA)—JANA's diplomatic editor has learned that the members of the UN Security Council have started to contact Libya, saying that the three big Western countries insist on issuing their UN Security Council resolution, and that the Council is not the one that wants to issue such a resolution.

Sudan

SPLA Denies Garang Headquarters Captured

PM1803144992 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 17 Mar 92 pp 1, 4

[Report by 'Umar Muhammad al-Hasan in Khartoum and Mu'awiyah Yasin in London: "Khartoum Claims Control of Garang's Headquarters But Rebels Deny This"]

[Excerpts] The situation in southern Sudan was even more unclear yesterday following conflicting reports about the capture by the Sudanese Army of Torit, the headquarters of Colonel John Garang, commander of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army [SPLA]. Meanwhile, Khartoum yesterday announced the execution by firing squad of a colonel convicted of embezzling 43 million Sudanese pounds.

Informed military sources told AL-HAYAH yesterday that the Army was in control of Torit. Torit is considered the second largest town in Equatoria Province after Juba and is used by Col. Garang as his headquarters and the capital of the territory under his control in southern Sudan, which is estimated to constitute 80 percent of the south's rural areas.

Dr. Richard Mola, SPLA official spokesman in London, stated however that he conveyed AL-HAYAH's information to his movement's leaders and they assured him that "Torit is under our control. It is not even threatened." He said that Pochala was still occupied by government forces, "but our forces are just 5 km from the town." [passage omitted]

In Nairobi, Dr. Lam Akol, leader of the wing which broke away from Col. Garang, also said that he doubted these reports, but he did tell AL-HAYAH that three days ago forces loyal to him in the Nasir area in Upper Nile Province spotted about 5,000-10,000 Sudanese soldiers in 300 vehicles including tanks, half-tracks, and troop carriers moving from the Subat area "but nothing more was heard of them after they passed Aiyot the day before yesterday (Sunday)." [passage omitted]

Akol said that his sources confirmed that the government has received new military equipment which in his opinion "was bought from China with Iranian funds," but he also said that there was no evidence of Iranian or Ethiopian forces participating in the current battles.

No immediate comment was available in Khartoum from Major General Muhammad 'Abdallah 'Uwaydah, the Army's official spokesman, who returned to the capital yesterday after a several-hour visit to Juba, but a senior officer at Army headquarters told AL-HAYAH that details of important military operations in southern Sudan would be announced within a couple of days. He declined to confirm or deny the occupation of Torit but said that rumors have been circulating in Khartoum for two days in this connection. [passage omitted]

Egyptian Official Denies Hala'ib Military Presence

NC1703160592 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1527 GMT 17 Mar 92

[Text] Khartoum, 17 Mar (MENA)—Dr. 'Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first under secretary and chairman of the Egyptian delegation to the Egyptian-Sudanese joint committee discussing the border issue, has denied that there is any Egyptian military presence in the Hala'ib area.

In a statement highlighted by the official Sudanese newspaper AL-SUDAN AL-HADITH in its headline today, Dr. al-Baz affirmed that media reports about such a presence are groundless.

The paper also highlighted in its headline a statement by 'Ali Muhammad 'Uthman, Sudanese Foreign Ministry first under secretary, who said that Sudan does not want territory which does not belong to it.

Western Sahara

Officials Urge UN Response to Moroccan Violations

LD1803182392 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Text] The Saharan authorities have called on the United Nations to respond to Morocco's repeated violations of the cease-fire in Western Sahara.

In a statement given to APS today, the Saharan information minister announced that the Moroccan Army did not hesitate to again violate the cease-fire when some days ago it started construction destined to support the digging work at naval base 14 in the Ausert sector.

NPPF Official Meets Kurdish Party Leaders

JN1103131292 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 11 Mar 92

[Text] Comrade 'Abd-al-Ghani 'Abd-al-Ghafur, member of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party's Regional Command and secretary general of the National Progressive and Patriotic Front [NPPF], has asserted that the interaction between the sons of our Kurdish people in the Kurdistan Autonomous Region and the historic leadership of President Saddam Husayn is stronger than the conspiracies of agents and the failing dreams of colonialism, Zionism, and anti-Arabism.

Speaking during his visit today to the headquarters of the Kurdish Democratic Party and the Kurdistan Revolutionary Party on the anniversary of the 11 March Statement and the autonomy law, the NPPF secretary general said that this statement was issued thanks to the will, wisdom, and struggle of the symbol leader, Saddam Husayn, and that it will forever remain a historic national achievement of the great 17-30 July Revolution and an object of pride for our great Iraqi people, both Arabs and Kurds.

During his visit to the Kurdish Democratic Party the comrade NPPF secretary general met with Comrade Ahmad Muhammad Sa'id al-Atrushi, the party's secretary, and members of the party's Political Bureau. Comrade 'Abd-al-Ghani 'Abd-al-Ghafur also met on this occasion with Comrade Majid Rashid al-Jibari, the Kurdistan Revolutionary Party's secretary, and the comrade members of the party's Political Bureau and Central Committee.

The comrades leaders and members of the two allied parties asserted that the will of our Kurdish people will always interact with the historic leadership of the leader of the people and the engineer of the 11 March Statement and the autonomy law, leader President struggler Saddam Husayn, in asserting the ability of our dear Iraq, both Arabs and Kurds, to foil the U.S.-Atlantic-Zionist conspiracy and that of agent elements.

Trade Minister—'Chaos' Hinders Supplies to Kurds

JN1303202992 Baghdad INA in Arabic 2105 GMT 12 Mar 92

[Text] Baghdad, 12 Mar (INA)—Trade Minister Dr. Muhammad Mahdi Salih has affirmed that the Trade Ministry's agencies and staff are delivering food rations to all governorates in the country, including the Kurdistan Autonomous Region.

In an interview aired on Baghdad television tonight, he said that the Trade Ministry had been delivering food rations in an organized manner before the northern region and the Kurdistan Autonomous Region were subjected to looting, sabotage, and chaos, which made it difficult to deliver any foodstuffs to all areas of Kurdistan. The fact that most of our stores were destroyed during the aggression and during the events resulting from the chapter of treachery and treason, he noted, also affected the delivery of foodstuffs. This, he said, forced us to provide supplies to the autonomous region from our stores in Ninawa and al-Ta'mim so as to ensure that all citizens get their rations of foodstuffs, including basics and baby milk, as allotted to them by their ration cards.

He added that after purging the governorates that had been subjected to riots, sabotage, and chaos, the Trade Ministry immediately resumed delivering supplies and foodstuffs from the ministry's stores in Ninawa and al-Ta'mim, using the ministry's trucks. He said the amounts are sufficient to meet the needs of citizens who had been deprived of supplies during the acts of sabotage. Despite these efforts, he added, we had several difficulties, especially trying to reach some areas because these were still witnessing chaos and acts of sabotage. Many of our trucks which deliver foodstuffs to citizens, he said, were looted and pillaged. This affected the deliveries to other remote areas.

We are concerned now for citizens who have not received their allotted rations, and we do not know how foodstuffs are being distributed in these remote areas because of the absence of an administrative authority and direct supervision, he added. We know, he said, that the parties which received the foodstuffs did not deliver them to the agents. Part of these foodstuffs were looted, and the other part is being sold on the market. This means, he said, that citizens are being deprived of their basic right to get allotted supplies.

He also pointed out that the Trade Ministry does not have an exact census for the govenorates, and that this has had a great effect on the whole process and permitted cases of looting and plundering, since false censuses are being sent, including illogical increases of population under the pretext of citizens coming back from mountainous areas. Therefore, they are creating crises and then claiming that the state is not delivering the allotted rations.

He noted that the Trade Ministry cannot take from the rations of other governorates to give to the areas mentioned above, since every governorate has a fixed ration to be dealt out to citizens. He added: They practiced acts of sabotage to deliberately harm citizens by refusing to receive flour in exchange for giving us wheat so that we might grind it again and deliver it to citizens.

The trade minister said that one of the important reasons for the rise in the prices of foodstuffs is the route that traders follow when they import foodstuffs. He said the route from Turkey was deliberately closed, despite the fact that Turkey allows traders to import permissible foodstuffs. This, he said, prompted traders to follow the Turkey-Beirut-Jordan-Baghdad route, which means that surcharges will be imposed on imported stuffs, and this will eventually lead to a rise in prices. If the Turkey route were reopened, after its closure by these parties, prices would be greatly different from what they are now.

Trade Minister Muhammad Mahdi Salih went on to say: By doing so, they aim to justify foreign troops interfering in the region under the pretext that foodstuffs are not reaching citizens. And by this, he noted, they have linked their destiny to British and U.S. foreigners and colonialists. They are thus practicing organized sabotage against Iraqi economy and directly harming citizens and their legitimate rights to get their food rations.

The minister hoped that the riots, chaos, and looting will come to an end and that the administrative authority will return so that all citizens might get their allotted rations—an objective that the Trade Ministry is seeking.

Further on Distribution Difficulties

JN1603151492 Baghdad INA in English 1355 GMT 16 Mar 92

[Text] Baghdad, Mar. 16, INA—Ministry of Trade was endeavouring to ensure the flow of foodstuffs in the Kurdish Autonomous Region, Minister Muhammad Mahdi Salih stressed.

The minister was quoted by AL-JUMHURIYAH daily as also saying that although the ministry was providing the northern provinces of al-Sulaymaniyah, Irbil and Dahuk with foodstuff, there were some difficulties in reaching some areas due to the absence of government authority there.

Mr. Salih added that the ministry faced no obstacles in supplying rationed foodstuffs to the town of Fa'idah in south Dahuk, Makhmur District and the areas surrounding Irbil Province.

He explained that the terrorists have looted food trucks which meant to provide the remaining northern provinces with their share of food, so the ministry asked its Kurdish staff in Ninawa and al-Ta'mim Provinces to receive foodstuffs from the ministry's warehouses in those provinces and distribute them to people though the ministry has no idea about the way the foodstuffs will be distributed.

The minister said food trucks were even sent to the remotest areas near the Iraq-Iran and Iraq-Turkey borders to provide people there with flour, rice, sugar, tea, baby milk and other items.

Mr. Salih said those who claimed that the government did not offer food to Kurdish people were themselves stealing the people's food or selling it on the black markets. Those groups have seized some 10,500 tonnes of grain from Zakho silo and prevented the authorities concerned from grinding the grain and distributing the flour to the people of Dahuk, the minister commented.

He added that acts of terrorism in the northern region have caused a sharp increase in food prices on the local markets, stressing that Turkey has opened the road through Zakho for Iraqi traders to import foodstuff but some terrorists in Kurdistan closed the route, which was a short cut to Iraq. This has forced traders to move their goods from Turkey to Lebanon then to Jordan, which meant additional costs and, subsequently, higher prices.

Kurdistan Conflict Being Used To 'Sabotage' State

JN1303210692 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1150 GMT 13 Mar 92

[Text] Baghdad, 13 Mar (INA)—The 11 March statement that laid solid foundations for national unity in terms of territory and people remains the right vehicle for the Iraqis and our people in Kurdistan to properly and ably express their personality and the human values in which they believe, according to AL-THAWRAH, mouthpiece of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party.

In an editorial discussing His Excellency President Saddam Husayn's address to the speakers of the Legislative and Executive Councils in the Kurdistan region, the paper adds: The experience of the past 30 years has underlined an elementary fact: Recourse to foreigners and their power is a doomed option.

Iraq is home to all the Iraqis, no matter how much they agree or disagree among themselves. The foreigners, however, have no role or place in determining the future of this country or its united people, the paper adds.

Foreigners are out to promote their exclusive interests, and only want to undermine and harm Iraq. They will only support self- determination for any given people only to the extent that the people become their servants and they the masters those people.

National dialogue in Iraq cannot be serious, honest, fruitful, or responsive to the interests of the people of Iraq and their unity and security as long as foreign influence and its traces remain in the region.

Dialogue will be possible and sound only when foreigners have no role to play therein, AL-THAWRAH asserts.

Using various means, agents and the enemies of our people have worked and continue to work to transform Kurdistan into a bridge to sabotage Iraq and steal its invaluable possessions and sell them to Iran at a cheap price.

AL-THAWRAH stresses that our honest, historic leadership that speaks for the conscience and interests of the people will not allow Iraq to be emptied of life and revival.

Such subversive action serves the interests of neither Iraq nor our people in Kurdistan. Our enemies must be deluding themselves to think that Kurdistan in its present condition can gnaw at all of Iraq.

Treason, sabotage, and recourse to foreign powers can hardly further the rights and the legitimate, human, national ambitions of our Kurdish people. They can be

served only in a strong, independent, and prosperous Iraq through dialogue, and brotherly, national solidarity, AL-THAWRAH concludes.

Paper Terms Kurdish 'Bet' on Foreigners 'Mistake'

JN1103121692 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1030 GMT 11 Mar 92

[Text] Baghdad, 11 Mar (INA)—AL-THAWRAH has asserted that the political leadership of great Iraq is greatly concerned for Iraq's unity and territorial integrity, and for defending this national unity under all circumstances.

In its editorial today under the headline "Iraq Will Remain One People" the paper says: Today marks the 22d anniversary of the issuing of the 11 March Statement and the 18th anniversary of the issuing of the autonomy law—the great national achievement which embodied a great triumph for the will of our people and which laid down strong foundations for their national unity. Under this law the Kurdistan autonomous bodies and institutions emerged to enable our Kurdish people to exercise their legitimate rights and attain security and stability.

The paper adds: The sons of our Kurdish people have now realized more than ever what autonomy means and what it is like for them to live in turmoil under emerging circumstances characterized by the absence of state services and the loss of security and stability.

The paper goes on to say: For those who are betting on foreign and colonialist forces and trying to gain from their strength, we tell them that their bet is not only a losing one but also a grave mistake that will not attain any of our Kurdish people's ambitions and aspirations. On the contrary, this bet will inflict losses and suffering on them. This has been proven by actual experience and the experience of the Kurdish people in particular.

The paper adds: Iraq is the only country in the region which recognizes the Kurds' national rights and their partnership in the homeland. This is the essence and substance of the autonomy law. Look at the neighboring countries which are practicing the ugliest forms of oppression, suppression, and coercion against the Kurds, and whose population is larger than that in Iraq. These countries have even violated the rights of our Kurdish people in Iraq and have bombed their villages in sight of the U.S.-Atlantic forces.

Paper Alleges PUK Carried Out Irbil 'Massacre'

JN1603084692 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0800 GMT 16 Mar 92

[Text] Baghdad, 16 Mar (INA)—Members of the [Patriotic] Union of Kurdistan [PUK] have carried out a savage massacre of the civilian population in Irbil city.

The newspaper AL-JUMHURIYAH cites civilians who fled from Irbil and arrived in al-Mawsil as saying that on 13 February PUK elements blew up seven houses and killed 23 citizens, including children, women, and elderly people.

The refugees said that clashes between the civilian population and the PUK gangs started in the area near the tobacco factory and the industrial zone and then spread to all neighborhoods in the city, with the fiercest and bloodiest clashes reported in the industrial zone and the Khabat neighborhood.

The refugees pointed out that clashes between the civilian population and the PUK gangs started because of the gangs' attempt to impose compulsory military service on the citizens and to drive them to training camps in the 'Aynkawah area.

The refugees said that the PUK gangs were forced to retreat to avoid further losses. The same gangs, however, launched a midnight attack on the same day and stormed the homes of many Kurdish citizens in those areas. They took a number of citizens away, including Safan Khadr, Samal Hasan, and Taha Habib, and shot them dead in the presence of their parents.

Irbil Bombing Kills 27, Wounds Four

LD1803235192 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1930 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Text] Twenty-seven people are reported to have been killed and four others wounded in an explosion in Irbil, Iraq.

The Patriotic radio announced the news, adding that the Iraqi forces were displaying the bomb's ability, taken from the opponents, when it exploded in a crowded Irbil market.

The radio said: Iraqi regime's measure was a deliberate conspiracy aimed at intimidating the people.

Meanwhile the radio has quoted the leader of the Union of Patriotic Kurdistan of Iraq, Jalal Talabani, as saying that Iraqi forces intend to launch a wide-scale offensive, an evidence of which is their military and combat preparedness.

Government Reportedly Arms Karkuk Arab Tribes

NC1903074292 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1600 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Text] The dictatorial authorities in Karkuk have distributed weapons to the Arab tribes and families and asked them to defend the city because it is theirs.

40 'Saddamists' Killed in Clashes With Kurds

NC1303155492 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1410 GMT 13 Mar 92

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] The heroic city of al-Diwaniyah witnessed a courageous operation by mujahidin [word indistinct] in the past few weeks. In a swift

and successful attack, the sons of the blessed uprising were able to inflict God's just punishment on two mercenaries of the regime, enemies of the people who worked at the so-called security directorate. Others were wounded in an attack on their 1985 super salon-model car with registration number 1110. The car [words indistinct] (?criminals) who played a dirty role in tracking down the mujahidin. Two of them, one named Radi Muhammad 'Adil, were killed while other mercenaries were fatally wounded.

Fear and panic gripped the elements enlisted in the Saddamist corps of crime and corruption in the city.

The ferocious clashes that started on the outskirts of Karkuk and (Shihri) cities between Kurdish revolutionary forces and the defeated Saddamist remnants have intensified. The Kurdistan Front sources have reported that the unsuccessful Saddamist forces randomly shelled residential areas. The forces of our brother Kurds returned fire against the hateful 'Aflaqites, who suffered grave losses in men and [word indistinct]. Some 40 Saddamists were seen killed and more than 30 others taken prisoner.

As it habitually does not reveal the truth, the hypocritical Ba'thist media have not disclosed the clashes in the north of the homeland. They answered by threatening the revolutionaries of our Kurdish people with retaliatory measures.

The [word indistinct] regime's moves come in response to its failure to convince Kurdish leaders of the alleged autonomy.

It is noteworthy that Jalal Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, has warned that the tyrant's forces are taking up new offensive positions and reinforcing them with huge troop concentrations supported with armored vehicles and heavy artillery in [city name indistinct] on Iraq's border with Turkey and Syria.

Turkish Raids on Kurdish Villages Reported

JN1403202892 Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 11 Mar 92 pp 1, 3

[By Khalid al-Hadidi and Turkish affairs editor 'Ali al-Sharifi]

[Text] Mosul, Baghdad—An atmosphere of sadness prevailed in a number of villages and towns in northern and northeastern Iraq following the massacres, which the Turkish forces have committed over the past few days. After meeting a number of refugees, who escaped to the city of Mosul and the nearby villages and towns for safety, the AL-JUMHURIYAH correspondent in the northern area said that the Turkish forces carried out intense air raids to either ruin or destroy tens of Kurdish villages and towns, which have recently been subjected to extermination campaigns. In a telephone call to the newspaper's headquarters last night, the correspondent said that fleeing eyewitnesses related stories about bloody massacres by the Turkish Air Force and Turkish Special Forces "commandos", which were accompanied by elements from the agent Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK].

The correspondent quoted eyewitnesses as saying that the recent crimes committed by the Turkish forces began as a result of a treacherous report from the agent elements that call themselves PUK. The eyewitnesses added that the first massacre was committed by the Turkish commandos near the Iraqi village of Briman [name as published] located in the border area with Turkey. These commandos stormed and set fire to a nearby cave to force people out of it.

Eyewitnesses also told the AL-JUMHURIYAH correspondent that the residents of the said village had entered the cave to escape from the recent Turkish air raids. They said that the commando forces opened automatic weapons fire on the people, who were forced to come out of the cave as a result of fire and smoke, killing 340 Kurdish citizens, mostly children, women, and elderly, and that their bodies were still littered the ground around the cave.

The eyewitnesses added that the bodies of another number of victims were still inside the cave. The correspondent met last night another number of Kurds, who fled the township of Hafatnin [name as published] near Zakho, which also came under intense air raids by the formations of the Second Air Force of the Diyarbakir area between 7 and 9 in the morning the day before yesterday. The fugitives agreed with a report the BBC carried during its Turkish language newscast the night before the last that scores of people were killed or wounded in the brutal air raids. The Iraqi township of Khakurk [name as published] near the borders with Iran also came under violent air raids by the Turkish Air Force planes on the night of 1-2 March. According to available information, large portions of more than 10 villages were completely destroyed. More than 35 Kurdish citizens were also killed in the raids, according initial results carried by AFP. UN officials in the area confirmed the reports.

Later, AFP also carried an urgent report that Ankara announced last night that the Turkish Air Force carried out new air raids on Kurdish villages in northern Iraq.

Government Deploys Forces in Baghdad, On 'Alert'

NC1703160292 (Clandestine) Voice of the Iraqi People in Arabic 1400 GMT 17 Mar 92

[Text] The tyrant's forces are deployed in large parts of al-Thawrah. Baghdad residents say that the defeated regime's authorities have established, and placed on alert, security and intelligence posts and deployed other Saddamist elements of repression in al-Thawrah. The residents added that the tyrant's regime took these measures to guard against confrontations and armed clashes after the spread of abuse, cursing, and public mockery of the defeated dictator Saddam Husayn.

They affirmed that Baghdad citizens are talking about an imminent end to Saddam and his putrid regime and an imminent new uprising in the wake of the political plan proposed by Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim [leader of the Supreme Assembly for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq] during his tour of countries neighboring Iraq. The residents said that the defeated regime's authorities inspect hotels and question occupants at night on the pretext of looking for Army deserters.

The popular forces attacked the ruling party's headquarters in the al-Rashidiyah suburb of al-Mawsil early last week, wrecking the party headquarter's facade and wounding Jasim Muhammad Matar, the commander of the headquarters. Iraqi opposition sources said that the attackers returned safely to base and that the attack was in retaliation for brutal acts by Saddam's repressive organs against the oppressed Iraqi people.

Report Assesses War, Blockade Effects on South

JN1503100792 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 15 Mar 92 pp 1, 2

[First of a series of articles on the situation in Baghdad and other Iraqi cities by JORDAN TIMES staff reporter Maryiam M. Shahin on her return from a 10-day trip to Iraq]

[Text] Hunger, poverty, the U.N.-imposed economic embargo and internal unrest have been on the back-burner of the Iraqi conscience this month. Iraqis have been braced in fearful anticipation of more attacks against their country since the beginning of March.

Verbal threats from Washington and London got some back-up from the U.N. last week and now the arrival of an American battle group in the Gulf has put the final touches on cementing Iraqi fears.

The announcement by British Prime Minister John Major in early March that his country would join the United States in striking at Iraq again sent the Iraqi dinar falling and brought new tension to Baghdad. Hopes rose as Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz left to New York that another coalition strike may be avoided.

But now, with the U.N. ruling that Iraq has failed to "fully comply" with the U.N. resolutions and the Americans sending warships to the Gulf as a warning, Iraqis cannot be at ease. Assurances that warnings are not deeds by some foreign officials in Baghdad fall on deaf ears. Unlike before Jan. 17, 1991, Iraqis believe the coalition to be capable of anything, and do not believe that the threats are a "bluff."

"Our nightmare is that they will strike again," said Samir 'Uthman, a student at the University of Baghdad, of the coalition forces.

These fears have come at a time when Iraqis are plagued by increasing impoverishment and fear of civil unrest. The news of a possible attack has left them at yet another stage of astonishment and fright. News in Baghdad, especially when it is about a possible attack, spreads like wildfire.

People say they are frustrated by their government's inability or unwillingness to steer away from confrontation with the Western-led coalition and with the west which they see as a war-mongering and greedy conglomeration of faceless enemies.

After the Security Council session with Mr. 'Aziz, which was reminiscent for many of Mr. 'Aziz's final meeting with James Baker in Geneva at the beginning of January 1991, many now see their government as helpless. People watch in despair as the Iraqi dinar hits another all time low to 20 to 1 to the U.S. dollar—now the going rate on the black market.

Right after Mr. Major's threat at the beginning of the month, a United Nations ballistic inspections team left Iraq and fears spread of yet another anti-Iraqi action by the United Nations. Harsh words and local media condemantion of the U.N. were seen as signals by the Iraqi public that the government thought another attack was possible.

The Iraqis have become increasingly wary of what they see as their total isolation, both in the international community and at home.

While continued sanctions, coupled with war profiteering have left the country in a prohibition-like state, the crime rate soars and internal unrest in both the north and the south threaten the country's unity.

Even in Baghdad, occasional unrest is evident. The Holy Month of Ramadan was inaugurated by cannon-like shots in the capital in the middle of the night. Iraqis say the shots were not "usual."

The tension in the capital is also based on increasing reports of unrest in the southern part of the country. Southern Iraq is strictly off limits to Ba'th party officials and government employees after dark. In fact, no one wants to travel to the south after sundown except foreign aid workers and curious journalists.

Aid workers based in southern Iraq say that machine-gun fire through southern cities like al-Basrah and al-Nasiriyah are common and occur almost every night. Ambushes on food supply trucks and government patrols are also a regular occurrence, in particular around the marsh lands.

While many local residents say the ambushers are supported and armed by Iran, others point out that the frequency of the attacks on food trucks indicates that the rebels are in need of food supplies.

"If they are in need of food," said one aid workers in the south," it would seem that their contact with Iran is less frequent than many believe."

A few peeople willing to talk to the Jordan Times were eyewitnesses to attacks in the south against party officials and supply trucks. However, most reports of such occurrences in the south are second hand. Officials meanwhile insist that the south is "under control."

But facts speak for themselves. Larger than life portraits of President Saddam Husayn which adorn most public buildings and main streets in the southern cities are torn down or disfigured. Public officials have removed most of these portraits all together not to present any evidence of the anti-government mood to visitors.

Reconstruction in the south of civilian targets of the allied bombing has not been given the same attention as those in the capital. Unlike Baghdad, where the rebuilding of bombed bridges has already been completed, most bridges in the south are still under reconstruction and a primary effort has been given to rebuilding government structures.

Southerners say that the intensive effort by the government to rebuild damaged portions of Shiite holy shrines in Najaf and Karbala' was the government's main effort to quell anti-regime sentiments in the south.

"As always there is dissatisfaction with the government and the rebuilding of the damaged parts of the holy shrines was a token to the south by the government," said a well informed resident of al-Basrah.

The extensive damage to the mosques of Husayn, Hasan and 'Ali, which are the holiest shrines for Shiites anywhere, was caused during fighting between government troops and militant southern rebels in March of 1991.

The token gesture, however, will evidently not be enough for the southern Iraqis. Living conditions which are characterised by 1,000 per cent price increases on some basic food staples, are far worse than Baghdad. Environmental damage resulting from the breakdown of infrastructure is visibly increasing. Ponds of sewage have enveloped many parts of al-Basrah and other cities in the deep south.

The polluted environment, the overall lack of fresh drinking water and most importantly the absence of spare parts to repair the essential sewage and water treatment systems have given rise to the spread of diseases which have begun to infect infants in many areas.

It is in southern Iraq where the effects of the U.N.-backed embargo, the allied bombings and the nature of the regime in Baghdad merge together to create a scene of misery wrapped up in the stench of sewage.

Paper Scores UK 'Insistence on Antagonizing Iraq'

JN1803144092 Baghdad INA in English 1340 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Text] Baghdad, Mar. 18, INA—AL-THAWRAH daily, organ of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party, confirmed that Britain's impudent insistence on antagonizing Iraq and its incessant attempts to harm its people reflected the true nature of the imperialist mentality which ran after the U.S. illusions.

In an article published today, the daily said that Britain had no alternative other than being subservient to Washington in the hope that it could play a role, though a simple one, to satisfy the complexes known through its political record which was rife with acts of aggression against free peoples.

The daily made it clear that the British experience in Iraq along the past 8 decades had learnt London a good lesson that Iraq could never bargain over its independence and sovereignty, no matter what kind of pressure or challenge it might face.

It added that Britain, which realized its failure to retain its empire image for the longest time possible and to cope with the changes of the age, erroneously believed that its loyalty for Washington could ensure a bigger future role, a role even different from its desperate attempts to repeat history.

The daily stressed that an 80-year-long experience proved that only the Iraqis could give judgment on Britain's conduct.

Commentary Says Desert Storm 'Not Yet Over'

JN1103181392 Baghdad Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1610 GMT 11 Mar 92

[Unattributed commentary]

[Text] Dear brothers: Last week the Zionist enemy launched a new spy satellite, the Ofeq-3, to carry out intelligence missions over Iraq, as it said. The question that comes to mind on this occasion is: Why should this spy satellite carry out espionage missions over only Iraq at this point in time, more than a year after the end of the aggressive global war against Iraq? There is only one conceivable answer to this question. The answer is that the Zionist entity and its masters, in the wake of the battles fought last year, are still concerned by and worried about the future. Indeed, the Zionist entity is afraid of Iraq in particular.

The launching of this satellite indicates that the Mother of Battles waged on Arab lands against the U.S.-Atlantic-Zionist forces is not yet over and that it is still in full swing between our heroic Iraqi people and their U.S. and Zionist allies. Had the Mother of Battles been over, or had it been settled, as alleged by the Zionists and their White House masters, the economic blockade imposed on the Iraqi people would not have remained in force. Similarly, the Zionists, in cooperation with the White House, would not have launched their new spy satellite. The battle will keep raging not only in the skies of Iraq and the territorial waters of the Gulf but also on the territory of militant Arab Palestine. This is because our Palestinian people seem to be the only party who are in

practice fighting the aggressive global anti-Iraq alliance through their armed revolution, their valiant intifadah, and their constant battles with the enemies of our Arab nation.

Paper Calls For End to UN Embargo

JN1003102092 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0711 GMT 10 Mar 92

[Text] Baghdad, 10 Mar (INA)—The newspaper AL-THAWRAH has said that lifting the blockade on the Iraqi people is the only decision that is in harmony with the logic of justice and the supremacy of laws.

In an article today the paper adds: When it explains Iraq's position to the UN Security Council tomorrow, our delegation will bring international legitimacy face to face with its last chance to get rid of the circle of fabrications and terrorism which has been ruling international decisionmaking for more than a year and a half.

The paper emphasizes that it is not only legal and human responsibility that will govern the UN Security Council's stand when it hears the voice of truth from the Iraqi delegation, but also the historical responsibility of this Council now that it has become a source of injustice, distortions, and a satellite of aggressive U.S. policy and its selfish interests.

The paper points out that the big and serious fact has throughout the past period been indicating that the UN Security Council was a victim of U.S. tyranny and a premeditated delusion to conceal facts. The other part of the truth indicates that Iraq has fulfilled all of its obligations toward the UN Security Council resolutions, that it has implemented all that concerns it in the clauses of Resolution 687, and that it has, within the framework of sovereignty, cooperated with all the international bodies and committees that were formed to implement the aforementioned resolution.

The paper says that Iraq has fulfilled all its obligations and that what remains is for the Council to manage to implement the clauses related to it in Resolution 687, the foremost of these being the lifting of the blockade on the Iraqi people and the halting of participation in the U.S. crime which seeks to pursue the aggression and annihilation campaign under international cover with the UN Security Council's conscious or unconscious participation.

Concluding its article, the paper holds all the UN Security Council member states responsible for what is happening to the Iraqi people and emphasizes that there is no longer any room for maneuvers and waiting. Now that Iraq has revealed the truth, no one has any excuse to acquit themselves of the crime and its consequences.

Iranian 'Treachery' in Sheltering Planes Seen

JN1503081292 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1958 GMT 14 Mar 92

[Text] Baghdad, 14 Mar (INA)—Prime Minister Muhammad Hamzah al-Zubaydi has asserted that during the negotiations with Iran, Iraq proceeded from the desire to establish good neighborly relations based on mutual respect and nonintervention in each other's domestic affairs. Iraq also proceeded from the desire to develop ties and bonds between the two neighborly countries.

In an interview with "The File" program, which was aired on Iraqi television tonight, the prime minister said: When I was minister of transport and communications during the visit to Tehran by the Iraqi delegation headed by 'Izzat Ibrahim, vice chairman of the Revolution Command Council, on 8 January last year, we expressed our total readiness to establish advanced, positive, and (?effective) relations. We noticed their enthusiasm, and the hospitality they accorded our delegation during that visit.

He added: The two countries' ministers of transport and communications held bilateral talks. The talks resulted in agreement on several issues pertaining to the transport and communications sector, among which were reopening air-transport routes for travelers and trade and shipping transport routes, in addition to activating transport through all available means. There was also agreement on what we had presented with regard to giving refuge to 33 civil transport airplanes. At that time, there were U.S. threats and possibilities of aggression. There was also agreement on giving refuge to Iraqi ships in Iranian territorial waters, opening telecommunications services and the ground station services, opening the airspace, exchanging expertise in all these fields, in addition to transferring Iraqi oil through Iranian ports.

The prime minister went on to say: We had raised the issue of giving refuge to Iraqi civil airplanes prior to the unjust 30-state aggression, not during it. However, the Iranian approval came in mid-January of last year. We were informed that the last date for handing over the airplanes was 16 January 1991 at 0800. The airplanes were actually handed over.

He noted: We realized that all this enthusiasm in their meetings with us, and their eagerness and readiness to fulfill our demands in all our meetings—followed by a chapter of treason and treachery by Iranian elements—was part of a prepared plan. Thus, all that plundering, burning, and destruction within the chapter of treason and treachery took place.

Prime Minister Receives Libyan Official

JN0903150692 Baghdad INA in English 1450 GMT 9 Mar 92

[Text] Baghdad, Mar 9, INA—Mr Muhammad Hamzah al-Zubaydi, the prime minister, received here today Mr. Sa'id Ahmad, Libyan charge d'affaires in Baghdad.

Bilateral cooperation relations in various fields were discussed during the meeting.

The Libyan diplomat lauded Iraq's heroic steadfastness in facing up to the U.S.-led 30-state aggression on Iraq and the great achievements realised by the Iraqis during the reconstruction drive.

'Green Party' Founded; Party Leader Comments

JN1803095392 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0820 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Excerpts] Baghdad, 18 Mar (INA)—The establishment of a new political party, the Iraqi Green Party, was announced here today under the umbrella of party pluralism in Iraq. Mazhar 'Arif, leader of the emerging party, told BABIL today that preparations are under way for the party to carry out all activities on the national, Arab, and international levels.

The Revolution Command Council, the highest legislative authority in the country, issued the political parties law last September to deepen and bolster the foundations of democratic practice in line with political, economic, and social developments in the country. [passage omitted]

Mazhar 'Arif noted that his party will concern itself with environmental issues in Iraq and the Arab homeland in compliance with the 1972 Stockholm declaration on the environment and with all principles on protecting and improving the environment on the Arab and international levels, in cooperation with all nations. [passage omitted]

Mazhar 'Arif, who is a journalist and writer on political affairs for the Iraqi press, said that his party will ask the international community to respect the rights of the Iraqi and Arab people, because the party is responsible for protecting the Arab environment for the sake of future generations. The party will also seek to develop a legal framework to protect the environment and will give priority to environmental plans that have an immediate impact on development. [passage omitted]

Mazhar 'Arif stated that his party includes a number of educated people, politicians, and specialists. [passage omitted]

Aide on Possible Syrian, Iranian Role in Bombing

TA1803163492 Tel Aviv Educational Television Network in Hebrew 1500 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Interview with Yosef Hadas, Foreign Ministry director general, by Rafi Reshef—live]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Reshef] Mr. Hadas, do we already know with certainty that the explosion was caused by a car bomb?

[Hadas] No. We still do not know that with certainty. We are still investigating. We hope to receive the results of the investigation very quickly, especially since a team of Israeli investigators is already on its way to Buenos Aires, at the request of the Argentine president and foreign minister to our own president and foreign minister.

[Reshef] So the team also includes investigators, and not just rescue aid?

[Hadas] No. Investigators. I am talking about the investigation. There is also a rescue team who will attempt to locate those missing under the rubble.

[Reshef] Yesterday, at least, Carlos Menem said he thought this to be the work of local Nazis. Do you have any idea what he based his assessment on?

[Hadas] He was talking more about the Nazi-like nature of this act, which reminds us of crimes perpetrated by the Nazis. Since we still do not know who the perpetrators of this heinous crime were, it is conceivable that terrorist organizations or certain elements in other Arab countries hired the services of various terrorists around the world.

[Reshef] Foreign Minister David Levi yesterday spoke of a Syrian-Iranian connection.

[Hadas] If we take a good look at what is happening in the region today, both inside the peace process and around it, we can point to a Damascus-Tehran axis. We know that Syria did not join the peace process with great willingness. It participated only so as not to remain isolated. On the other hand, Tehran is continuously demanding a halt to the peace process. It has even threatened some of the participants in a bid to bring the talks to an end.

[Reshef] Yes, but was Levi merely making an assessment, or did he possess concrete facts from the scene of the explosion?

[Hadas] In addition to our political assessment, we are seeing practical cooperation in the field between Syria and Iran—for example in Lebanon—in order to strengthen Hizballah. Hizballah's nature is no secret. That organization trains with Iranian commanders in Lebanon's al-Biqa'. Al-Biqa' is under total Syrian control. All the assistance Iran extends to the terrorist organizations in Lebanon moves across Syrian territory. That is known to everybody. Moreover, even the Syrian forces themselves in Lebanon assist certain terrorist organizations. That, too, is no secret. [passage omitted]

Top Banker on Need To Change National Priorities

TA1803170492 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Passages in quotation marks recorded]

[Text] Bank of Israel Governor Ya'aqov Frenkel today called on the government to reopen the debate on the state budget following the U.S. refusal to grant Israel the loan guarantees for immigrant absorption. Professor Frenkel said that under the new circumstances Israel must change its order of priorities, as there are certain things it simply cannot afford. Our economic affairs correspondent, Yaron Kulas, reports:

[Kulas] The U.S. refusal to grant Israel the loan guarantees is not a threat to the survival of the Israeli economy, Frenkel made clear. He said, however, that life would become much more difficult now. Following the U.S. refusal, Professor Ya'aqov Frenkel called on the government to reopen the state budget for further debate.

[Frenkel] "We will have to reevaluate our entire array of expenditures in all sectors and ask ourselves, in light of the new challenges we face, whether we can still afford the same kind of outlays today—social, as well as real, expenditures—that we thought we could afford yesterday."

[Kulas] We asked the governor about state revenues, or in other words, additional taxes.

[Frenkel] "We must be very careful not to increase the tax burden on the business sector. That is the sector we should be encouraging now."

[Kulas] Governor Frenkel stressed that from now on every economic move should be evaluated according to its contribution to investments. Investments are now the key to the successful absorption of immigrants. Without guarantees, the banks will have to raise huge amounts of capital on the international money markets. Professor Frenkel also warned against passing legislation detrimental to the banks.

[Frenkel] "Any kind of legislation that generates uncertainty regarding the strength, capability, and stability of the banking system obviously will undermine and disrupt its ability to raise money in international money markets."

[Kulas] At any rate, Frenkel said, no difficulties in raising foreign currency for the economy are expected this year.

Continuing Comment on Guarantees, Arms Sales

'Extensive and Mortal Damage'

TA1803193892 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 18 Mar 92 p B1

[Commentary by Gid'on Samet: "This Is Not Just a Big Argument"]

[Text] It is no longer a question of guarantees, arms sales, or occasional insults—of a strain or chill in relations. What is happening now between us and the United States should be seen from a totally different perspective: Our relationship with the U.S. Administration is a serious problem that is inflicting extensive and mortal damage on Israel. In a changing world that is supposed to be governed by a new order, Israel is losing its traditional place on the U.S. map. What is most threatening is that its security and well-being are being dangerously damaged in the process.

There were times not too long ago when we had a strategic understanding anchored in an ironclad agreement. There were times when we used to do business together: The United States wanted Israel—it actually pleaded with us—to sell arms to dark regimes to which Congress had banned such sales. Now Israel is seen as a burden, and its international arms trade is perceived as a wicked nuisance by a host of secret leakers in Washington. A new item on the agenda is an analysis of the grammatical nuances of the word "fuck" [preceding word in English] uttered by an outraged secretary of state.

It was not long ago that the United States considered us a strategic asset, tasked with curbing the influence of its rival superpower in the region. That superpower has now vanished, and so has the use of Israel as a tool of U.S. policy. The world has changed. America is no longer threatened, and it can now allow itself to treat us differently. A strong Israel may once have been a key interest of Washington, but it is no longer an important consideration in its regional policy. We are perceived as hindering a process of accommodation.

It is hard to imagine that in the not-too-distant past the United States would have been so scornful of our anxiety about the supply of lethal missiles to Syria. The equivocal U.S. behavior about the location and interception of the North Korean ship carrying missiles typifies the frivolous attitude toward Israel's mortal fears. The Bush administration has begun losing its sensitivity to what Israel perceives as a genuine threat.

If we add to that the United States' categorical refusal to inform the international financial community that it will underwrite our loans, the full picture of the threat to our most vital interests will emerge: This is not an argument, a confrontation, or a crisis along the lines of similar incidents in the past, but a callous statement about the place Israel occupies today in the U.S. global outlook.

The support America has always given us cannot be replaced. Our national might cannot be based only on a strong army. It has always hinged on a robust attachment to a powerful and supportive superpower, which has been gradually withdrawing its support. In the long run, this will inevitably weaken Israel's ability—not only to maintain a decent standard of living—but also to defend itself.

This is not an ordinary argument. Something far more serious than just plain resentment has built up between one confrontation and another. Israel's vital lifeline has grown thin in years of unceasing arguments with the United States over almost every issue, from spying on their soil to settlement. That is the only way to explain the full range and dangerous depth of the state of relations between the two countries.

Who is to blame? That is an important question, to which observers have a variety of answers. The United States had no interest in pulling the rug from under Israel's feet. Even when the administration's sensitivity decreased, we could always count on a large number of congressmen to stand up for our basic interests. That support has also been eroded, and not through any arbitrary congressional decision.

There can be no doubt that this menacing chain of events could have largely been avoided had Israel conducted itself differently with regard to the peace process in general and concerning the big bone of contention—the settlements—in particular. Washington would have then approved the loan guarantees. Even if it is less sympathetic to us than its predecessors, the current administration would have had no reason to criticize us. Relations between the two countries would not have been easy, but would have followed a clear path as part of the negotiations for an arrangement. Israel would have been assured of the support of Congress, and, even with a hawkish government in power, it could have claimed to be negotiating in good faith.

All that did not happen. In the last two years Israel rejected almost every U.S. proposal, most of them of a kind that will never be offered again. It is hard to believe the administration's claims that it is not interested in replacing this government. At the same time, the Israeli Government has repeatedly provided it with more than enough reason and made it easy for the administration to take measures against it. It thus inflicted national damage that is almost unprecedented in the history of Israel's policymaking. The Israeli Government should be declared guilty of destroying one of the most important attributes of our national security.

America will not decide who will rise to power here in a few months. No clairvoyant can predict how the U.S. conduct toward us will affect voters: Will it make them toughen their position toward the government or will it increase their support of the government that has been marked as a target by the United States? Given that the damage caused by the government is so vast, it is the civic duty of each one of us—without Washington's help—to decide whether it deserves to be punished at the ballot box.

'Unprecedented Low' in U.S. Ties

TA1803112692 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 18 Mar 92 p 2

[Editorial: "A Plaster Job"]

[Text] Not only between the prime minister and his foreign minister is there no political coordination. It appears that coordination between the prime minister and the defense minister is also flimsy. Moshe Arens, who is in the United States, showed national pride when he told the administration: "We won't crawl and we won't beg for the loan guarantees." But Yitzhaq Shamir in Jerusalem pretends that he did not hear what his heir apparent has to say and utters the exact opposite: It would not occur to us to drop the request for the loan guarantees. The ebb in ties with the United States is merely a passing "episode," Shamir said.

Is Shamir trying to fool not only his audience but also himself? Does Shamir want us to believe that he does not know the truth? Can we still talk about a dispute which will blow away with time, which seems to be what Shamir is saying?

In Hebrew there is only one expression to explain Shamir's reaction to the crisis with the U.S. Administration, and that is that it is a plaster job.

Shamir is plastering over the loss of the final hope of receiving the loan guarantees. Shamir plasters over the fact that the administration is adamantly refusing to compromise with us. Shamir is plastering over the aspiration of Bush and Baker to force the Likud to cave in totally. On the eve of the elections Shamir is plastering over what everybody knows: that our relations with the United States have deteriorated to an unprecedented low.

Shamir deludes himself and he believes that it is sufficient to plaster over what is happening in order to change it.

'Trashy Allegations'

TA1703145792 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 17 Mar 92 p 2

[Editorial: "Not To Give In"]

[Text] There are some signs that the U.S. allegations that Israel sold U.S. weapons and technology are subsiding. Here in Israel sighs of relief can already be heard: In another few days the crisis will be over.

That must not be allowed to happen. The United States has slandered and besmirched Israel too many times, only to hide later behind the backs of anonymous low-level officals. If America gets away with it this time as well, it will only be a matter of time before it uses the same weapon again. Meanwhile, anti-Israeli feeling is growing among the U.S. and international public, while the administration claims complete innocence.

If Israel is convinced its position is just, it should not simply ignore the matter. We must be the accusers and demand a full clarification. What do we have to lose? We are not getting the guarantees, the political process is stuck, and the administration is even leaking overt threats about cutting back on economic and military aid to Israel. In such a situation, the only option is to attack; we have no alternative. If we bow our heads, wipe off the spit, and claim that it is raining, we will only be inviting the United states to come out with more trashy allegations.

Knesset Recesses Until After June Elections

TA1803150092 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1400 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Text] The 12th Knesset held its last session today and went into recess until after the elections. Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that the last two bills that passed a first hearing were a bill for the encouragement of literature and a bill supplementing the incomes of one-parent families up to the minimum wage.

Our correspondent noted that despite the recess, the Knesset may reconvene for a special session next week to approve Refa'el Eytan's reappointment to the cabinet.

U.S. Gives Israeli Data to Egypt Tank Project

TA1703095892 Tel Aviv HADASHOT in Hebrew 17 Mar 92 p 1

[Report by Yehoshu'a Me'iri]

[Text] Data processed by Israel's Armored Corps and handed over to the U.S. Department of Defense were put at the disposal of the managers of a U.S.-Egyptian project for the manufacture of the A1M1 tank by the Egyptian military industries.

According to Egyptian sources, the data are being used as a basis for conducting experiments aimed at reinforcing the new tank and improving its systems of identification and movement when antitank missiles are fired at it.

The lessons learned by the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] also dealt with the need to improve the inner coating of the tank so that it can provide maximum crew protection. In the wake of those lessons, the United States developed new material with a resistance of up to 260 degrees Celsius and put it at the disposal of the project's management.

Production of the new tank has not yet begun, but several Arab countries promised Egypt orders worth hundreds of millions of dollars. Experts on their behalf, including the Syrian chief of staff, have already visited the tank's production site.

Some 10 months ago, U.S. Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney visited the plant and decided to grant permission to Defense Department experts to assist Egypt in the production of the tank.

King Husayn Returns From Tour, Makes Statement

JN1803195392 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Excerpts] With God's care, His Majesty King Husayn returned home this evening, concluding a tour that included Iceland, Canada, the United States, France, and Germany.

During this tour, his majesty held talks with the leaders and ranking officials of these countries. [passage omitted]

On his return, His Majesty King Husayn made a statement to our correspondent for political affairs, and to journalists.

[Begin recording] [Husayn] We felt a great appreciation of this country's [not further identified] positions; its endeavor to serve the coming generations in this part of the world; and the goal of establishing a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace acceptable to the generations. We were received warmly in all the capitals we visited. The meetings were very beneficial, and we hope that their results will be positive and will be felt by all.

[Unidentified reporter] As our friends in the world, particularly the United States, have shown an understanding of the Jordanian position, especially concerning the Gulf crisis, do you expect that relations with our Arab brothers, particularly in the Gulf states, will show the same understanding?

[Husayn] I think that our positions, as I said, are clear to all. Our concern for the Arab peoples, their interests, their existence, their future; and our concern that Arab brotherhood be maintained and restored to what it used to be, and to grow in the future as it should, are also clear. In fact, I cannot predict what will happen in the future, but this is what we hope, and what we have always targeted, without having any other purpose in any stage.

[Unidentified reporter] Your Majesty, did you feel that there was a possibility that the U.S. Administration would interfere in the negotiation process during the next stage?

[Husayn] I think it is difficult to answer this question at this stage, but we felt that there was an appreciation of the Jordanian position and the situation in general, and the need for the efforts to continue toward realizing a just and lasting peace so that the coming generations accept it. In my view, all the parties concerned, including the United States, should interfere if these negotiations falter or reach a dangerous point, or a point where they end fruitlessly.

[Reporter] Your Majesty, regarding the confederation, particularly as the Palestinians are speaking much about the subject of confederation: Has Jordan's position changed? Do you think that it is early to speak about this, before a settlement is reached?

[Husayn] I think we have not presented anything new, because talk about this subject has been going on for years. The dialogue is continuing, and at the appropriate time, God willing, we shall reach what is in our joint interests, not the interests of individuals, but the interests of two halves of one family—the Palestine question, and the Arab cause.

[Reporter] Regarding economic assistance to Jordan, what was the response of the leaders of the countries you visited during the tour?

[Husayn] Things depend on their results, so wait for the results. God willing, they will be good. There is appreciation, there is a respect for Jordan and for all its sons, regardless of their origins and breeds, of the Jordanian family, and of its principled positions. There is the sympathy that I felt and, in fact, I was satisfied with.

[Unidentified reporter, in English] The Saudis are claiming that you have accused them of financing fundamentalists in Jordan. Can you comment on that?

[Husayn, in English] I think I was very clear, and I don't see why people should try to read behind the lines. I am very honest and very, very sincere in what I say. What I've said was very, very clear, and I don't see why it should be distorted in any further way. [end recording]

Views Peace Process

JN1803203092 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] On his majesty's appreciation of the commitment of the leaders of the countries he visited to the peace process, his majesty hoped that more public interest in the stability of this region would be seen, which can only be realized through a just and lasting peace.

His majesty said this region cannot continue to be isolated from the rest of the world, and said that there are enough challenges and dangers that may increase to where they constitute a danger to stability and progress in this region.

He added: At this time, I feel strongly that there is a desire by all to do everything that can be done to benefit from the chances, and to defend our rights, and to work for a better future for the coming generations.

In answer to a question on Jordan's role in the peace process, his majesty said: I think that the feeling everywhere is that Jordan played the main role during the beginning of this process which, as I said several times, will take much time and effort. We know where we stand and know what we want. The world appreciates this effort.

In a reply to a question on relations with sisterly Arab countries, his majesty said: On our part, we have sought, and we always seek, to have the best relations with everyone in this world. As for our brothers in the region,

I think that we have done all that we can to defend their causes, interests, security, and future within the capabilities available to us.

His majesty added that these relations will surely improve and continue. His majesty stressed that our concern is always directed to the human being and to the Arabs wherever they might be throughout this region, and to their future. We are committed to this, and we will use any chance to move forward in these relations without bargaining over our dignity and honor—which cannot be bargained over in any case, if we seek to realize the interests of the Arab peoples and the coming generations in the whole Arab world.

King Interviewed on Relations With Iraq, U.S.

JN1803214292 Amman Jordan Television Network in English 2022 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Interview with King Husayn by CNN correspondents Robert Novak and Rowland Evans—date and place not given; recorded]

[Text] [Evans] Your Majesty, if the U.S., under the UN auspices, should attack Saddam Husayn of Iraq next week, where would Jordan be?

[Husayn] Jordan, as a member of the United Nations, implemented Security Council's resolutions, as they pertain to the Iraqi problem and to the crisis that evolved over the period from 1990 onwards. We are doing so to the best of our ability.

[Evans] So, if that happens—and there are many indications pointing in that direction; that the U.S., leading the UN coalition, will attack Iraq again—this would put you in the U.S.-UN camp this time, as opposed to the war a little over a year ago?

[Husayn] Sir, there is no link whatsoever, nor is there in my mind any concern whatsoever, contrary to what it might have been the impression of many between Jordan and Iraq, at the level of leadership and leadership decisions. If we had had any concern and we still have concern, it is for the human dimension of this tragedy and for the people, both of Iraq and of the region, and I hope that matters will not reach the point where another military confrontation will take place.

[Evans] One more on that, Your Majesty. Is it true, however, that if this should have been, it would make it extremely difficult in your dealings with your very large Palestinian population—many of who have come in from other Arab countries—really under being treated as virtual pro-Iraqi criminals during the Persian Gulf war. And that would be a trouble or would it not for Jordan?

[Husayn] The returnees are over 329,000. Jordan was the only country that gave them a passport, and by that I refer obviously to the Jordanians of Palestinian origin. Many of them had been in the Gulf since 1948. Many of those who returned returned with their children and grandchildren. They were never criminals. I believe they contributed their best towards stability and progress in that region. This is one of the burdens we bear right now. But on the other hand, I believe that within Jordan itself, Jordanians, regardless of their origins, have united under freedom enjoying a democratic life that is their right, and none of us would certainly wish to see the use of force in our region or in our area. And we will continue to hope and pray that problems can be resolved otherwise.

[Novak] Your Majesty, is it your opinion that it is possible, it is more likely than not likely that there will not be a resumption of force against Iraq?

[Husayn] I honestly must differentiate here once again between our concern for the people of Iraq and for relations between peoples in our area in the future, and any other consideration. I certainly do not believe that any would contemplate the use of force just for the sake of it. I am sure that all of us are responsible in the world. Or certainly hopefully the majority of us are, and I hope that to never come to that.

[Novak] Do you think, sir, that Saddam Husayn's conduct—now I am not talking about a year ago or a year and a half ago, but his present conduct—is responsible?

[Huysan] I believe that absent democracy, popular participation in government, respect for human rights, pluralism—many mistakes can occur in different parts of the world. I lived through disasters in our area—1967, 1990. One would hope that maybe things will change in the future, and that is the only way by which we can ensure that mistakes could occur in the region would be avoided, and mistakes have occurred elsewhere in the world in the past.

[Evans] Your Majesty, before you travelled here this past week, the deputy prime minister of Iraq, Mr. Tariq 'Aziz, stopped in Amman on his way to the United Nations session in New York to see you. Can you tell us, sir, what did he want from you? Did he ask for help in dealing with President Bush, or what?

[Husayn] His visit was a courtesy call, and I met with him and others on that day that visited Jordan, including the foreign minister of Armenia and a Palestinian delegation, but it seems that his particular visit drew a lot of attention. It was really a courtesy call, nothing more.

[Evans] Your Majesty, you have been accused or charged with violating sanctions imposed on Iraq by some very responsible American politicians. First, are those charges based on any element of truth? And second, if not, why would American politicians make such a charge?

[Husayn] I believe it is a very easy to check and verify, and it's probably, sometimes, easy to arrive at the proper conclusions. We have, we believe, we lived up to the best of our ability under the circumstances of the sanctions imposed by the Security Council, to have adhered to them, and implemented them as well as we could. And this against the background of very close ties with Iraq,

the country; Iraq, the people. We are perfectly happy to say, and with good justification in our view, that those items permitted to reach Iraq in the way of food and medicines under the United Nations resolutions are passing through as is oil in the other direction, again with the United Nations being fully aware of that. Beyond that, there is nothing we can say.

[Evans] Can you tell us right now, Your Majesty, that the President has asked for some 70 million dollars in aid for Jordan—economic assistance and some military assistance—that this answer you have just given us will persuade Congress to give that aid or do you think there are elements up there in Congress that are out to get you?

[Husayn] If there are elements anywhere in the United States, in this world, that try to get us, I can't do very much about, nor can my country. But, on the other hand, I believe that I stand here as a leader of a country that has been the friend of the United States, out of choice of both sides, through very, very difficult years. Years that have seen a lot of transformations in our region and in the world. And there was a time when all this started, when we may have been the only ones who voiced, with pride, this friendship and defended it. So, amongst friends even, from time to time, there may be disagreements or misunderstandings, and I have always been convinced that these gray areas will disappear when the light come through finally to clear all these misunderstandings.

[Novak] We would say, sir, that the long friendship between your regime and the United States Government probably hit a low spot a year ago, during the Gulf war. When you visited President Bush at the White House this week, on Thursday, would you say that the warm relationship has been restored now? Or do you think that you still have a ways to go?

[Husayn] I believe that the warm relationship of friendship and mutual repsect that has grown between Husayn, before you here today, and George Bush over many, many years, in my view—between the President of the United States and Husayn of Jordan, between our two countries—is well on its way to have regained, hopefully, the warmth, the understanding, the atmosphere of which we were once proud.

[Novak] Could I ask you, Your Majesty, if you and President Bush discussed the Gulf war, the war of a year ago?

[Husayn] I believe that the difficulties were enormous. We acted in the best way we could out of a concern for all involved, and the concern for people. But all this, including the misunderstandings, I believe is in the past and is behind us, and we are looking forward.

[Evans] Sir, let me throw one old quote back you. You said then: I do not believe there will be any victor in the Gulf war. Would you say today, looking back, that was underestimating the intention and the decisive nature of President Bush's effort in the Persian Gulf war?

[Husayn] I would like to say that there is much that needs to be done in our region, regardless of any other factors, and I believe that we must come in line with the rest of the world to give our peoples a better chance in the future.

[Evans] But would you say, sir, it was a victory by President Bush?

[Husayn] The real victory will come much later, sir.

[Evans] Now let me go the peace settlement, the peace effort, the peace process that Secretary Baker pushed himself so hard. You have said that if the construction of settlements on the West Bank did not stop, you feared that might torpedo the peace talks. Have you hardened that position in the three meetings that the Israelis and the Palestinians have had, or have you softened it?

[Husayn] I have repeatedly suggested that the creation of new settlements and beefing up existing settlements, at a time when there is a peace process to deal with the problem in all its aspects on bilateral level and on the multilateral dimension, is really creating new obstacles in the path of peace....

[Evans, interrupting] But, it continues, it just continues.

[Husayn] It does, it does, and this is hopefully something that will be addressed in some way, and at least give us all, therefore, the opportunity to deal with the substance and with the challenge that is before us.

[Novak] Do you have any hope, any real hope that this process in the forseeable future is going to produce some kind of settlement?

[Husayn] I've always felt that it was going to take a long time to change people's minds, to get them to think beyond what they've been used to, to think of what peace can really offer, to break away from fortress mentalities. But we've seen so much change in the world, and I think we, hopefully, will have learned that—all of us, Israel and ourselves, Palestinians, Jordanians, other Arabs—that there must be peace. We cannot lose this chance, and we must ensure that we end up with success.

[Novak] President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria said on Thursday the United States is trying to force the Arab world into a settlement by an effective arms embargo. Do you think that has any truth to it at all?

[Husayn] An arms embargo? I believe that if we only search for arms instead search for ways to resolve problems that have been the ladder to power for every power-hungry person or group in our region, then we are in trouble. I hope that we will work for peace.

[Novak] Your Majesty, does the rise of Muslim fundamentalism all the way from Algeria to Iran pose a threat to the political stability of the Middle East?

[Husayn] Certainly and hopefully not in Jordan itself, sir. And I hope not in the area. I believe that extremism—and I differentiate here, and I don't generalize, as opposed to fundamentalism, if that is the right word to use—is born of despair, is born of anger, is born of loss of hope of giving people the kind of decent life that is their right in that area in general. I do not believe that it is a threat.

[Evans] Your Majesty, I have heard from very authoritative sources that Saudi Arabia, in an effort to protect itself from the onslaught of fundamentalism, is actually financing some operations by fundamentalists in Jordan. Can you comment on that, sir?

[Husayn] I have nothing that I wish to say on this point, but any financing of attempts to undermine democracy, to undermine freedom, or to distort faith and religion, in the name of faith and religion, is very dangerous. And if there is a source that supplies extremists with material resources, I believe it is hurting itself.

[Evans] But you are telling us, Your Majesty, that it is possible that what I suggested is happening?

[Husayn] I'll leave it to you to investigate.

'Strange' Saudi Statement

JN1803194292 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Excerpts] The U.S. television network CNN conducted a wide-ranging interview with His Majesty King Husayn, during his visit to Washington, on numerous issues related to the Arab world and the Middle East in general. The two famous commentators, Evans and Novak, who conducted the interview with his majesty, posed questions on what they termed the phenomenon of Islamic fundamentalism in the Arab world, including Saudi Arabia and Jordan. [passage omitted]

We notice that his majesty attempted to avoid commenting on this topic by saying: I have nothing to say about this issue, especially since the U.S. announcer claims to have obtained this information from very authoritative sources. However, in view of the announcer's insistence in saying that Saudi Arabia is financing some fundamentalist activities in Jordan, his majesty was satisfied with giving a general answer, in which he did not name Saudi Arabia, saying that such financing, which aims to undermine freedom and democracy or distort faith, is a dangerous matter. If there is a party that supplies extremists with material resources, I declare that it is hurting itself.

What prompted us to transmit this excerpt of the interview is the strange statement that SPA attributed yesterday to a responsible source, who claimed that in the interview his majesty the king cast doubt on Saudi Arabia's stand on Jordan. The source asked: Is it reasonable for Saudi Arabia to finance activities against Jordan? Evidently, the source has not read nor watched His Majesty King Husayn's statements, or he was given a distorted translation. His majesty did not name Saudi Arabia in the interview at all, and accused it of nothing. It was the U.S. commentator, claiming to have obtained his information from very authoritative sources in the United States, who leveled this charge at the fraternal kingdom. Moreover, his majesty went further when he cast doubt on the U.S. commentator's information, urging him, at the end of the statement on this issue, to investigate the information that he claims to have heard. Thus, it is clear how unfair the Saudi spokesman's statement was, and how he was hasty in commenting on the royal interview without attempting to verify its content.

UN To Dispatch Troops To Enforce 242, Others

JN1903081092 Amman AKHBAR AL-USBU' in Arabic 19 Mar 92 p 1

["Exclusive"]

[Text] Western diplomatic sources based in Amman have revealed that the UN Security Council's five permanent members have decided to send 10,000 soldiers to the Middle East to implement UN Resolutions 242, 338, and 425.

AKHBAR AL-USBU' has learned that each member state will send 2,000 soldiers equipped with all types of weapons. This force will be under the command and supervision of the Security Council.

The sources told AKHBAR AL-USBU' that the international troops will begin arriving in the region in June and start their mission to implement the resolutions in September.

Islamic Jihad Claims Bombing of Israeli Embassy

NC1903082992 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 19 Mar 92

[Text] The Islamic Jihad Organization [IJO] has claimed responsibility for the operation against the Zionist entity's Embassy in Argentina, stressing that Operation Child Martyr Husayn—the son of Sayyid 'Abbas al-Musawi, the prince of the Islamic resistance martyrs—is one of our continuing blows against the Zionist enemy in the war which we will not end until Israel is wiped out.

The statement said: An Argentinian who had converted to Islam, Abu-Yasir, carried out the operation. The security which the United States, the global thief, and its criminal allies are trying to impose on the Islamic and oppressed peoples is a myth; rejected because it serves their interests and scheming plans. We must reassert that no one will be secure while our nation is threatened and our dear Islam is in danger. Now we will not let our oppressed peoples be the sole victims. We will make the aggressors pay dearly, and we will follow them everywhere until they vanish. Truly strong is the grip (and power) of thy Lord. [koranic verse]

Addressing the honest Muslims, the statement said: Our open battle with the criminal Zionist enemy requires our permanent presence in the arenas of jihad and confrontation, and our readiness to sacrifice our lives and blood for God. We call on all Muslims to join the jihad, united under the slogan of liberating Jerusalem and eliminating Israel, to defeat our usurping enemy and expel him in humiliation from beloved Palestine. We send greetings of admiration to the mujahidin of the Islamic intifadah in Palestine in the month of intifadah and Jerusalem Day; and to the heroes of Islamic Jihad, the heroes of axes, daggers, and knives. We call on them to escalate their jihad operations against the Jews.

We also greet our brother mujahidin in Turkey who are fighting the Zionist enemy and dealing him painful blows. We ask them to continue their blessed jihad.

The IJO statement added: O noble martyr, congratulations on your blessed martyrdom, and on your seat with a sovereign omnipotent. We will remain loyal to your chaste blood and that of dear Islam's martyrs. We will continue on the path of holy jihad—the difficult, thorny path, that of red martyrdom. We will sacrifice our lives against the usurping Jews, because no one can reproach us in our work for God until the banner, There is no God but God, is hoisted worldwide.

The statement concluded: We pray to God to raise us to a station of praise and glory, to make us follow you, and to include us in the convoy of the prince of winners in this great month, the prince of believers 'Ali Bin-Abi-Talib, God's peace be with him. You have won by the God of the Ka'bah.

Buwayz—Retaliation Will Impede Peace

NC1903104192 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1019 GMT 19 Mar 92

[Text] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz has said that any hostile Israeli action will impede the peace process in the region.

Buwayz was replying to a question from REUTER on the fear of an Israeli military action, following threats by Israeli ministers to punish those responsible for the explosion at the Israeli Embassy in Argentina.

Replying to a question on whether the statement issued by the Islamic Jihad Organization in Beirut yesterday claiming responsibility for the explosion endangers Lebanon following the Israeli threat, Buwayz said: This statement does not mean that the perpetrator of this act came from Beirut. I see no link between what happened in Argentina and Lebanon.

Al-Hirawi on Peace Process, Syrian Withdrawal

NC1903070092 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 19 Mar 92

[Text] President Ilyas al-Hirawi affirmed that Lebanon has participated in the peace talks because it wants peace, and in order not to give Israel a pretext. He added: We, therefore, have defined the course of peace the way we want and understand. In other words, we want a complete peace, President al-Hirawi added. He said what counts to Lebanon is the implementation of Resolution 425.

In his interview with Press Doyen Milhim Karam, published in AL-HAWADITH magazine today, President al-Hirawi denied knowledge of any obstacle preventing Lebanon from obtaining aid. He said that Lebanon's non-receipt of such aid has generated the current economic crisis. The president of the Republic emphasized that the economic crisis is transient, adding: We have the intrinsic power to resolve this problem.

In his interview, President al-Hirawi said: We are determined to implement all the provisions of the al-Ta'if Accord, and we are working with all our capabilities to ensure a national reconciliation and understanding to return the evacuees to their areas and spread an atmosphere of amity and fraternal coexistence among the Lebanese.

President al-Hirawi went on to say: I do not believe that the Syrians have any objection to withdrawing, as stipulated in the al-Ta'if Accord. He expressed the conviction that Lebanon is heading toward good and prosperous days, and will play a prominent role in the region which will exceed the expectations of many. He maintained that security and neutrality are fully ensured for the free elections.

Cabinet Meeting Discusses EC Aid, Refugees

NC1903074892 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1700 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Text] The cabinet, which held a session this morning under President Ilyas al-Hirawi at its temporary headquarters, decided to hold an extraordinary session on Tuesday to discuss with the members of the Council for Reconstruction and Development all their activities and the loans they are seeking.

President al-Hirawi also briefed the cabinet on current contacts regarding aid from the EC. It was reported that an EC delegation will visit Lebanon at the beginning of April to discuss this subject. The cabinet also discussed the refugees, and reaffirmed its earlier decision not to move any refugee from the place in which he has taken shelter before solving this issue.

Five ministers were absent from today's session: Walid Junblatt, Roger Dib, Talal Arslan, Sami al-Khatib, and Niqula al-Khuri.

Amal Claims Killing of Militiamen in Ambush

NC1903064092 (Clandestine) Voice of the Mountain in Arabic to Lebanon 0530 GMT 19 Mar 92

[Text] The faithful resistance Amal has said that the Two Martyrs Hasan Dawud and Haj Haydar Husayn Unit detonated a mine under an Agent militia military vehicle on the al-Rayhan-Sujud road yesterday afternoon.

In a statement, the resistance added that the vehicle was destroyed, killing five militiamen inside.

During a combing operation, occupation forces burned down Majid Muhyi-al-Din's house in Kafr Rumman.

Army Reinforces Positions in al-Nabatiyah Area

NC1903101092 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0945 GMT 19 Mar 92

[Text] The Lebanese Army has strengthened its forces deployed in the al-Nabatiyah area, setting up new positions in the hills and reinforcing them with vehicles. The Army also set up new roadblocks at the al-Nabatiyah entry points and others in villages, deploying mechanized patrols in the region last night.

Al-Asad Returns From Visit to Egypt

JN1803154692 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1515 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Excerpts] President Hafiz al-Asad returned to Damascus today, following a two-day visit to Egypt. During this visit, he held talks with Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubarak on a number of issues of interest to Syria and Egypt, and to the Arab nation in general. [passage omitted]

Returning with the president were Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam, Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', and the delegation accompanying them.

President Hafiz al-Asad and Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubarak held a closed meeting at the Egyptian Presidential Office at 1015 today. Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam, Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', and Syrian Ambassador to Cairo Dr. 'Isa Darwish; and on the Egyptian side Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi, Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa, Minister of Information Safwat al-Sharif, and Dr. Mustafa al-Faqi, director of the president's Information Office, joined the meeting at 1045. The two meetings tackled the situation in the region, as well as Arab and international issues. [passage omitted]

'Deep' Damascus-Cairo Ties Hailed

JN1903075092 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0550 GMT 19 Mar 92

[From the press review]

[Text] Today's papers comment on the important visit President Hafiz al-Asad made to Cairo, and his talks with Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubarak.

Today's TISHRIN says: President al-Asad's visit has bolstered Syrian-Egyptian coordination, which constitutes the foundation for any joint Arab action. This is especially true since events have shown that the only successful formula for joint Arab action is one based on deep understanding between Damascus and Cairo.

TISHRIN notes: This visit strengthened Syrian-Egyptian relations, and provided new potential for dealing with various Arab conditions. It has also shown the Arabs' adherence to peace, without relinquishing a grain of land or rights. The visit indeed helped to strengthen the Arab position and to deepen Syrian-Egyptian understanding, which was—and still is—the base for Arab steadfastness in the face of external threats.

AL-THAWRAH also asserts that President Hafiz al-Asad's visit to Cairo is particularly important during the difficult phase through which the Arab nation is passing. The paper says: The visit is part of the ceaseless and persistent efforts being exerted by his excellency on all levels and in all directions to create circumstances that will allow our nation to unify its efforts and energies under the banner of solidarity and unity.

His excellency's efforts, the paper adds, seek to enable this nation to rise to a level that will allow it to confront the forces of tyranny and evil, which lie in wait for the Arabs, and which try hard to disperse them, to break their ranks, and to deprive them of the means of power and self-defense.

AL-THAWRAH concludes by saying: Syria insists on solidarity. It does all that it can to achieve it, because solidarity is the strongest weapon the Arab nation has to defend its land and fate, which are under threat.

With regard to Israeli intransigence and world instability, AL-BA'TH says: Reading history and watching events indicate that there must be a return to a policy of stable international balance, regardless of how long this might take. This means that everything in the world changes. The inevitability of the collapse of Israeli policy is very clear, since it cannot respond to such changes.

'Indispensable Foundation' of Unity

JN1803145192 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Station commentary]

[Text] Gentlemen: By all standards and yardsticks, and by an almost absolute consensus, the Arabs and the world consider the content of leader al-Asad's historic speech before the People's Assembly last week the inauguration of the new stage of Arab struggle, that Syria is getting ready to lead with a determination further enhanced by challenges, and with a confidence that grows and becomes more entrenched with each new event. Moreover, by all standards and yardsticks, the clear approach embodied in the speech of the leader of the homeland and nation toward Syria's determination to revive the blood circulating in the veins of joint Arab action, on the basis of solidarity and brotherhood, was tantamount to a declaration of a new round of creative Syrian efforts to reinforce all sides of the Arab position on the requirements of the peace process, and the paralysis and stalemate it faced at the hands of the Israelis.

In this context, President Hafiz al-Asad's visit to Cairo and talks with President Mubarak may be considered an indispensable foundation that must be laid by Cairo and Damascus in the interest of the entire nation. On this foundation, Cairo and Damascus can forge a unified Arab position that safeguards right and leads the nation to progress and victory.

Perhaps the current Arab situation under the ongoing peace endeavors requires all Arabs to rise to the level of the challenges that face the nation, and to deal with what is happening to us and around us with one language that protects us from those who wager on our fragmentation and contradictions. On such wagers our enemies build most of their policies. The Arabs still remember the efforts made by Syria over the past two decades, so that pan-Arab battles could be faced according to a pan-Arab decision, and so that this decision can be based on pan-Arab interests, unaffected

by parochial tendencies, toward which some of us might be dragged for various reasons. Syria has plenty of proof to confirm that the unified pan-Arab position based on the nation's interest was able in the past—in more than one difficult test—to wrench the nation from its ordeal and crown its steps with victory. Perhaps the pan-Arab decision in the glorious October war of 1973 is the best example of this.

The Cairo talks are extremely important. We, along with Arabs everywhere, pin on these talks the hopes that we and the nation are used to pinning on Damascus and Cairo whenever they meet.

The current Arab scene cannot be the last scene in the lives of the Arabs. Nor can our certainty that we can overcome this scene, and that we are worthy of the rights we are requesting, be killed in our hearts. For we represent a nation that has never, throughout its history, given in to oppression or bowed to challenges, no matter how dangerous.

Hizballah Delegation Meets Khaddam in Damascus

NC1703073892 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 17 Mar 92

[Text] His eminence al-Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah, Hizballah secretary general, visited the Syrian capital at the head of a delegation of the Hizballah leadership, meeting Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam.

They discussed regional and domestic developments, and praised the great role played by the Islamic resistance in the face of Zionist aggression. They warned against the danger of the Zionist scheme, and its intentions toward Lebanon and the region. The discussion also focused on the internal situation, particularly the deteriorating economy and its remedy, as well as expected political developments concerning Lebanon.

Afghanistan

Najibollah Agrees To Transitional Government

LD1803184792 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Dari 1600 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Address to the nation by President Najibollah on 18 March—recorded]

[Text] In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Dear compatriots, brothers, and sisters. Since the commencement of the National Reconciliation Policy—which is based on the clear injunctions of Islam and the longstanding traditions and customs of Afghans—with an understanding of our national and historical responsibility, we have advocated practical means of halting the war and ensuring peace in the country by initiating negotiations among the Afghans themselves. Five years have elapsed since that day, and we believe that ending the war and ensuring peace in Afghanistan has become an urgent need.

In order to fulfill this pressing desire of the war-weary people of Afghanistan as soon as possible, the Government of Afghanistan had to travel difficult paths and routes, full of vicissitudes. Through reliance on God Almighty, and His infinite glory and assistance, and the support of the noble people of Afghanistan, the government has emerged from various and repeated ordeals.

As was pointed out during the celebration of the fifth anniversary of the National Reconciliation Policy, the most important measures taken by the Republic of Afghanistan, following the declaration of the National Reconciliation Policy, were continuing an active struggle in defending the independence, territorial integrity, national sovereignty, and national unity of Afghanistan; providing grounds for the withdrawal of Soviet forces; and averting the danger of national dismemberment.

Dear compatriots, we express gratitude and appreciation for the efforts of the United Nations, the UN secretary general and his special envoy, and personalities and circles of the world's peace- loving countries who are assisting our people in attaining peace and the revival of Afghanistan. I should state that the measures and initiatives of the Government of Afghanistan conform with the new international atmosphere and developments.

The five-paragraph statement of the UN secretary general, and the overall efforts of the United Nations toward a solution for the Afghanistan issue, have created important bases and elements, so that, by utilizing these principles, Afghans may sit together and exchange views about a solution to the Afghanistan question.

As you are aware, following persistent, patient, and continuous efforts by the Government of Afghanistan and the United Nations, the grounds for the implementation of the said statement have been provided, which took up much of the time of the internal and external sides involved in the Afghanistan issue. It has now been transformed into a place of our people's righteous hopes and wishes.

Dear compatriots, as you know, his excellency Mr. Benon Sevan, the special emissary of the UN secretary general, recently visited Kabul in his efforts toward the realization of the UN peace plan. As a result of his meetings with me, and with all other Afghan authorities, we reached agreement on a series of principles concerning the gathering of Afghans and ending the war as soon as possible.

In the past few days I have met with vice presidents, the prime minister, members of the Cabinet, speakers of the two national assemblies, the leadership of the Armed Forces, the leadership of the Supreme Court and prosecutor's office, the Executive Board, as well as with members of the Central Council of the Homeland Party and leaders of the political parties regarding the proposal of his excellency UN Secretary General Butrus Ghali. I asked their advice and opinion about the draft of an announcement to be issued by the President of Afghanistan concerning expediting the UN peace plan and convening an Afghan gathering in agreement with the UN secretary general's envoy.

Herewith I bring to you, dear compatriots, the declaration of the president of Afghanistan in this regard:

Declaration of the president of Afghanistan:

I have just ended a serious session with His Excellency Benon Sevan, special envoy of the UN secretary general to Afghanistan and Pakistan, in connection with the UN efforts regarding the advancement of a peaceful solution to the question of Afghanistan. I assured his excellency the secretary general of the complete support of the Afghan Government for his efforts, especially for the Afghan gathering he proposed.

In addition, I once again assured Mr. Benon Sevan—based on a proposal from UN Secretary General Butrus Ghali and on the pledge I have given the people of Afghanistan—that I will not insist on participating in the proposed Afghan gathering as part of the UN process, which is being hosted by the secretary general.

I agree that, in accordance with an understanding at the Afghan gathering, as a result of the UN process to establish a transitional government in Kabul, I will transfer all executive power and authority to the transitional government on the first day of the transitional period. As the secretary general has stated, the transitional government will have the appropriate power and authority and should guarantee the unity, safety, and security of the Afghan people, as well as the territorial integrity of Afghanistan. It will also guarantee full respect for human rights and organize free and just elections to create an elected government in Afghanistan.

I fully agree with the statement made by the UN secretary general in his report to the 46th General Assembly session, which has been reaffirmed by Mr. Benon Sevan, that appropriate international guarantees should be provided so that the transitional government can effectively perform its duties, as outlined before. Therefore I restate my readiness to regard the interests of the people of Afghanistan above all personal and factional interests; it is my earnest wish that all the other sides will also take similar measures.

This is the declaration made by the president of Afghanistan which I have presented to you.

Dear compatriots. Our ancestors, whose names and deeds the history of Afghanistan holds with pride, have passed great tests with honor during difficult and decisive times. In these situations the ancestors only thought of the national interests of the country, its territorial integrity, and its independence and made numerous sacrifices to safeguard these values. When the independence of the homeland and the sovereignty and national unity of Afghans is threatened, all Afghans, regardless of kinship, nationality, tribe, region, language, and race have stayed in a united rank and trench. The glowing pages of this homeland's history have been illuminated by the great names of the representatives of the nationalities residing in our united country such as the Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks, Turkmens, Nuristanis, Pash'eis, and other coreligionist nationalities. These heroes of history have time and again shown with their actions that Afghanistan belongs to all Afghans and that protecting the country's unity is the national and patriotic duty of every one of them.

Now, at this turning and principal point of the country, it is the national duty and debt of all Afghans to enhance their unity and cohesion with the necessary awareness and to enter the peace process with a superior understanding of the higher interests of Afghanistan. They should thus show to the world that Afghans, like their ancestors and forefathers, had and have the capability and ability to protect the homeland, their national heritage, their independence, and their historical values in the best manner.

To tread the path of peace, our country needs firm steps, as well as the Islamic and Afghan will and intention of every nationality, tribe, and clan in the country. History bears witness that whenever foreigners were unable to eliminate the independence, freedom, and history of this brave country on the battlefields, they sowed the seeds of discord and disunity among this auspicious family and fostered hostility among nations with the same faith and same religion, who had lived a life of coexistence with Islamic solidarity and fraternity. The foreigners never succeeded as they wished to. This is because Afghans have utter hatred for national disunity, hostility, revenge, and malice in whatever shape or form they may take. They view these actions as opposed to national interests and only to the benefit of Afghanistan's enemies, who are lying in wait for such an opportunity.

How beautifully it has been said: Whether we are from Balkh or Qandahar, we are all fostered by one mountain range. On this limitless sea, we are on board the same stormy ship! Compatriots, come let us join hands, standing shoulder to shoulder, side by side, and with our national, Afghan, and Islamic will and determination jointly guide this battered ship, which is rocking in stormy weather, threatening all our lives, to the shores of safety.

Ulema, pious religious leaders, national personalities, scholars, political allies, Armed Forces personnel, youths, heads of groups, commanders inside the country, refugees, esteemed compatriots, sisters and brothers. There is a saying: You cannot clap with one hand. Restoring peace in Afghanistan is not the work of one person, one party, or one group. Peace and blessings are a general indivisible factor, the benefit and fruits of which are quite tangibly felt by the people of Afghanistan. Therefore, each one of them, in one way or the other has a religious, historical, national, and Afghan responsibility to ensure peace and to end war.

As the president of Afghanistan, I once again take the first step. Taking into account the national interest of the country and my national duty as an Afghan, whose utmost wish is to ensure peace and national unity and protect the unity of Afghanistan, I expect all forces involved in Afghanistan, especially the leaders of formations, internal commanders, and Afghan personalities residing abroad, to actively embrace this peace process to achieve a political and peaceful solution to the Afghanistan issue and to implement the UN peace process.

Afghanistan is the common home of all Afghans. They have equal rights in determining their destiny. To determine our joint destiny, with combined efforts and united action, come, let us welcome the UN peace process and with the help of Almighty God, may He be glorified, realize the nation's longstanding aspiration to ensure peace.

As far as the Afghan Government is concerned, we use and will continue to use all means, opportunities, and resources to end the war. Realizing the National Reconciliation Policy and establishing peace in the country are our greatest aspirations. To achieve them, we request help from Almighty God, may He be glorified. We will continue on the path of seeking a political and peaceful solution to the issue of Afghanistan with the support and cooperation of the people of Afghanistan. However, not even for a second will we allow the peace process, which guarantees elimination of all the problems and difficulties resulting from the war, to be held hostage by warmongers and hardliners.

As we will very soon welcome the arrival of spring, I have total confidence that the day will soon come when the clear and azure skies of our homeland will be cleared of the dust of war, killing, and revenge. We will see the

smiles of peace and of the triumph of peace on the faces of our children, youth, and elderly people in the country. Success comes from God.

Najibollah, UN Envoy Hold News Briefing on Talks

LD1803231992 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Text] Esteemed Najibollah, President of Afghanistan and Benon Sevan, Deputy and Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General held a press conference this afternoon in the Presidential headquarters and talked to domestic and foreign journalists about their meetings aimed at accelerating the process of a political solution of the issue of Afghanistan.

At the beginning of the news conference, the Afghan president in replied to a question raised by a correspondent of the BAKHTAR INFORMATION AGENCY. Najibollah said that in the course of several meetings with Benon Sevan during the last few days, views were exchanged in a climate of friendship, sincerity, and cooperation on the implementation of the five-point plan of the UN Secretary General. In addition to the general topic of the solution to the problem of Afghanistan, Najibollah said they also talked about a number of specific issues. He gave a list of names of the participants from the Afghan side in the intra-Afghan conference to Benon Sevan. The contents of the draft of the President's Declaration was agreed.

Benon Sevan thanked Afghanistan's for its warm welcome and mentioned the UN plan for a political solution for Afghanistan. He stressed again that a political solution is in the hands of Afghans themselves, without foreign interference. The UN does not have any specific plan in this sphere. It is up to the Afghans themselves to implement the plan. Benon Sevan said that he trusts the people of Afghanistan to bring peace to their society.

Commentary Welcomes UN Plan

LD1803221792 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 0730 GMT 17 Mar 92

[Unattributed commentary]

[Text] In the present conditions, persistent and serious efforts are continuing by the United Nations, peace-loving countries and international personalities to end the 13-year war, which for Afghans is a bleeding wound. Our peace-loving people welcome this process and follow it step by step. Meanwhile, masks are being torn off the faces of those who [words indistinct] of Afghanistan. Our people, in the course of 13 years of meaningless and [words indistinct] war, recognize them and send them hatred. Recent events, as well as their reaction to international efforts and plans regarding the maintenance of peace in Afghanistan, once again, at national and international levels, tears the masks from their faces.

Our compatriots are aware that in the light of efforts made by the international community toward settling the question of Afghanistan and starting intra-Afghan negotiations, under the chairmanship of the UN secretary general, Benon Sevan, assistant to and special envoy of the UN secretary general, has toured our neighbouring countries, Pakistan and Iran, in order to hold talks with all parties involved in the Afghan war. He held talks with various Afghan groups and authorities of the Republic of Afghanistan. He expressed satisfaction at the results of his preparatory talks for intra-Afghan negotiations.

The Republic of Afghanistan, by putting forward proposals and plans, has consistently stated and has again and again categorically declared that it will support and welcome any measure that will help in establishing the peace process in our country. However, a number of opposition leaders want the continuation of war and the creation of obstacles in the way of maintaining peace in our country. They do this because they see only their own selfish interests in the continuation of war in Afghanistan. [Words indistinct] that those who engaged in a 13-year destructive war for killing Afghans and the destruction of the country, [words indistinct].

Some time ago, Golboddin Hekmatyar, expressing opposition to the UN five-point plan, stated that this plan regarding Afghanistan is imposed and nonpractical, and that the United Nations cannot achieve its aim. He also said that he would not sit with Republic of Afghanistan officials and the former king, Mohammad Zaher Shah. This in itself is a manifestation of the war-mongering position and unwarranted stubbornness of Golboddin. Our people can clearly see who is trying night and day to end the war and establish peace in our country, and who is placing rocks on the path leading to the the realization of peace in Afghanistan. Peace, which is the will and demand of all the people of Afghanistan, will be maintained; warmongers, as always, will earn the curse of the people.

Rebels Urge 'Immediate Resignation' of Najibollah

BK1903092292 Hong Kong AFP in English 0913 GMT 19 Mar 92

[Text] PESHAWAR, Pakistan, March 19 (AFP)—Afghan guerrillas Thursday called for President Najibollah's immediate resignation and reaffirmed their claim to have captured the main northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif.

The Jamiat-e-Eslami rebel faction said Najibollah's declaration Wednesday that he would accept the transfer of power to a transitional government envisaged in a U.N. peace plan was "a step in the right direction, but was not enough."

Jamiat spokesman Najibollah Lafraie said the head of state had been forced "to make some sort of concession, because of the mojahedin victories in the north."

In a statement Thursday, the Tadzhik-dominated mojahedin faction reaffirmed its claim to have "liberated"

the town of Mazar-e-Sharif, near the border with Uzbekistan. Kabul repeatedly dismissed the report Wednesday evening.

Najibollah said Wednesday he would not "insist" on personal participation in a U.N.-sponsored dialogue among Afghanistan's warring sides scheduled to be held in Europe in April.

But Lafraie said this did not mean Najibollah would not demand "a role for his regime or his puppet party."

The president, who took power under Soviet occupation, should "resign without conditions and accept a government conforming with the wishes of the Afghan nation," he said.

Golbuddin Hekmatyr, who heads the Hezb-e-Eslami faction, said Najibollah had "no other option" but "immediate resignation."

"No member of the communist party will be acceptable to the mojahedin," the fundamentalist leader said.

The 45-year-old president made an announcement on national television Wednesday night accepting for the first time the total transfer of power to a transitional government set up under the framework of a U.N. peace plan.

The United Nations hopes next month's inter-Afghan gathering will set the peace process in motion.

The situation in Mazar-e-Sharif remains unclear, with diplomatic and U.N. sources in Islamabad unable to confirm the Jamiat's claims.

The U. N. has withdrawn all its personnel from the town, most to Islamabad, sources close the international body in the Pakistan capital said.

Western sources here do not exclude the possibility of a rapprochment between the northern mojahedin and the nominally pro- government ethnic militias that have been fighting Najibollah's dominant Pashtoon tribe since January.

Independent sources confirmed Thursday recent Jamiat successes in the north, citing the "neutrality" of the local militias, made up of Uzbeks and Tadzhiks, as a contributing factor. But the same sources said they doubted Mazar-e-Sharif had fallen to the rebels.

Meanwhile, unconfirmed reports in the Afghan capital said Nabi Azimi, the Tadzhik commander of the Kabul garrison, had taken control of northern town's troops.

Jamiat-e Eslami Claims Capture of Mazar-e Sharif

BK1803131492 Hong Kong AFP in English 1310 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Text] Islamabad, March 18 (AFP)—The Afghan rebel faction Jamiat-e Eslami said Wednesday that its guerrillas had captured the northern city of Mazar-e Sharif.

Mohammed Ayoub, head of the Jamiat's military committee, told AFP [AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE] by telephone from the Pakistani city of Peshawar that "Mazar-e Sharif has been captured by mojahedin. Everything has been captured."

There was no confirmation from independent sources.

Ayoub said he had received the information on a radio message from rebel commander Mohammed Alam.

Alam is in charge of operations in the Mazar-e Sharif area, Ayoub said. He is affiliated with Jamiat and with the northern supervising council of Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, an ethnic Tadjik who is one of the main figures in the Afghan resistance.

Ayoub said militia forces under General 'Abdol Rashid Dostam, who is in conflict with the Kabul Government, did not take part in operations on either side.

He said he had no information on casualties or prisoners.

Two rebel agencies based in Pakistan also announced the "liberation" of Nahri Shahi district, a kilometer (half mile) from Mazar-e Sharif, which is south of the border with the republic of Uzbekistan.

The MIDIA NEWS AGENCY said an air base and the airport of Mazar-e Sharif had been severly damaged by artillery fire and fighting Tuesday.

Mazar-e Sharif is the main city in northern Afghanistan. During the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan the city was of great importance to the Red Army and to the government of President Najibollah.

In Kabul, well informed diplomatic and United Nations sources said Wednesday that the city of Mazar-e-Sharif was quiet and dismissed the reports that the airport had been taken as "fiction."

Said one ranking Afghan civil servant whose brother is in Mazar: "I spoke to him on the telephone today and he said all was quiet."

Diplomatic and U.N. sources in Kabul said their information was similar to that of the Afghan officials, adding that although the city was tense, there were "no report of fighting."

Government Says Mazar-e-Sharif Under Control

BK1903101092 Hong Kong AFP in English 1000 GMT 19 Mar 92

[Text] KABUL, March 19 (AFP)—The Afghan government and its allied militia are in control of the northern Afghan city of Mazar- e-Sharif despite the presence in the city of some "rebel provocateurs," an authoritative government source said here Thursday.

The source identified the rebel elements as members of the Jamiat-e-Eslami mojahedin groups, which had claimed from Pakistan that the city fell into its hands Wednesday.

However, the source said Afghan Deputy Defence Minister Nabi Azimi, government militia commander Abdul Rashid Dostam and General Sayeed Jaffar Nadeiri, a regional commander, were all in the city.

Dostam and Nadeiri, both non-Pashtoons, have been at loggerheads with the regular army over the past month, but military sources said earlier this week that Azimi had calmed the tense confrontation before it could break into armed conflict.

"There is balance, there is understanding," the government source said, referring to the situation in Mazar, a crucial northern town on the lifeline Salang road which allows food and fuel to flow into Kabul.

"All three are there," he said, referring to Azimi, Dostam and Nadeiri, adding that there were "some Jamiat provocateurs" in the city and that checks were being made on identity cards.

He also added that the Salang Road was open.

Independent sources in Kabul confirmed that the United Nations had pulled a dozen or so expatriate staff out of the city, one of Afghanistan's largest, two days ago because of the mounting tension.

The sources also said the situation appeared to be fluid in Mazar-e-Sharif, and did not rule out that some kind of modus-vivendi might be worked out between government forces, the militia and the rebels who share ethnic and Uzbek ties.

The former commander of Mazar-e-Sharif, who has reportedly been removed from the city, was a Pashtoon, the tribe which has for centuries traditionally dominated Kabul and of which President Najibullah is a member.

Tajiks and Uzbeks are predominant in the north as well as in major urban centres.

Defense Official Meets With Balkh Residents

LD1803152792 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1430 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Text] General Mohammad Nabi 'Azimi, first deputy defense minister and acting head of the Northern Operational Zone High Command, met today at the command's headquarters with a number of ulema, religious leaders, and elderly people in the presence of Minister Without Portfolio Seyyed Ekram Paygir and Seyyed Taher Shah Paykargir, chairman of the Balkh Provincial Council, and assured them about the stability of the situation in Balkh Province.

According to a report by a BAKHTAR correspondent from Mazar-e Sharif, the first deputy defense minister and acting head of the Northern Operational Zone High Command talked in detail and gave information to the participants about the peaceful measures and rightful policy of the Republic of Afghanistan toward ensuring a nationwide peace in the country and the development of the process of peace and tranquillity in Balkh Province.

Jalaluddin Badri, a senator from Balkh Province in the Meli Shura, then spoke and expressed the support of the people of Balkh Province for the aims of the national reconciliation policy and the peaceful measures of the Republic of Afghanistan.

Armed Opposition Attack Repulsed in Konduz

LD1803210692 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1430 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Text] As a result of heroism and bravery by the personnel of the security posts in Hazrat-e Emam District, Konduz Province, a surprise attack by the armed opposition groups was repulsed. The warmongers sustained heavy casualties.

According to a report by BAKHTAR INFORMATION AGENCY, as a result of retaliatory attacks by the personnel of the security posts a number of the members of Hezb-e Eslami of Golboddin were crushed, including the ringleaders Sakhi, Nur, and Chari. A number of them were badly injured, including ringleaders Abdul Salam, Sayed Mohammad, Din Mohammad, and Khaja Ahmad. A number of heavy and light weapons and a large quantity of ammunition belonging to the armed opposition groups were destroyed.

Pakistani 'Interference' Said Obstructing Peace

LD1803224792 Moscow TASS in English 2208 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Text] Moscow March 18 TASS—"Over the years passed from the day of proclamation of the reconciliation policy we have addressed the opposite side more than thirty times with various projects and peace proposals," Afghan President Najibollah said in an interview published in the "DEN" (DAY) weekly. However "the opposition gives no positive answer" as its leaders are "under control of those who want to use the war in their own interests," Najibollah stressed.

The Afghan leader accused the opposition leaders that they have not met the obligations on freeing prisoners of war, which were assumed by them during their trip to Moscow at the end of the last year. As for the Geneva agreements on the political settlement of the Afghan problem of April 14, 1988, "Afghanistan and the former Soviet Union observed them in full," he added. "Not a single item" of these agreements have been fulfilled by "some" participants of the Geneva agreements.

The current military situation in Afghanistan is now "better as compared with the past," but the Afghan Armed Forces "as usual remain vigilant and ready" to defend their motherland, the president stressed.

According to Najibollah, over the years of the war the Afghan Army have adopted "new methods of carrying out combat actions, studied weapons and military equipment" from the limited contingent of the Soviet troops. "As a result of an exchange of the experience and mutual aid, our armed forces have managed to defend the country and protect the peaceful life of the Afghan people," he said.

The Afghan president sees "the main obstacle on the way of the development and improvement of the reconciliation policy" in the "continuation and even extended interference" in the internal affairs of the country on the part of Pakistan. If Pakistan and Saudi Arabia follow the example of Moscow and Washington and stop delivering armaments to the Afghan sides, then "the necessity to search for new resources of obtaining weapons" will disappear, Najibollah pointed out.

"In the present situation it does not matter who is helping us. We will accept with thanks any aid from any country if it is disinterested and does not pursue any political or military advantages," the Afghan president stressed.

India

Kyrgyz President Offers To Sell Enriched Uranium

BK1803130292 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Text] The Kyrgyzstan president, Mr. Askar Akayev, has ruled out the possibility of an Islamic fundamentalist axis emerging in the Central Asian region. Addressing a press conference in New Delhi today, he said his country will not tolerate any form of extremism or fundamentalism and is opposed to terrorism. He hoped that India's neighbors will reciprocate its policy of peace and sort out differences through a dialogue. The visiting president offered to sell enriched uranium to India subject to international safeguards.

'Implications' of Pentagon Report Viewed

BK1803130592 Delhi All India Radio General Overseas Service in English 1010 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Commentary by Captain C. Uday Bhaskar of the Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses: "Pentagon, India, and Pakistan"]

[Text] The classified Pentagon document that appeared in THE NEW YORK TIMES of Sunday allegedly speaks to discourage so-called India's hegemonic aspirations, unquote. [as heard]. It has received considerable attention within the country and in the parliament. While the authenticity of the report is being ascertained, as also its current status by the Indian Embassy in Washington, it may be useful to examine the essence of the Pentagon position paper and the deeper implications. The timing of this report in THE NEW YORK TIMES has to be also noted, both from the Indian and American perspectives, and the whole affair appears to be rather intriguing. The first fact that the secretary, Mr. J.N. Dixit, was in Washington, D.C. at that moment to further Indo-U.S. relations needs to be recalled; as also the fact that the commander of the U.S. 7th Fleet, Vice Admiral Stanley R. Arthur, is now in New Delhi as part of the ongoing Indo-U.S. defense cooperation.

The gist of the report, which is germane to U.S., is that a certain strategy has been prescribed for the USA to retain its dominant position in the global hierarchy. This strategy, it must be emphasized, is more in the nature of a perspective position drafted by the Pentagon, and yet the nuances are disturbing and intriguing as mentioned at the outset. The report, it is alleged, suggests that to stem or prevent nuclear weapons proliferation by states like Iraq, North Korea, Pakistan, and India, the U.S.A. may be faced with the question of whether to take military steps to prevent their development or use of weapons of mass destruction. The report then goes on to refer to the possibility of other powers, such as Germany and Japan, also being tempted to acquire similar capability, but that is not relevant just now.

The other part of the report that needs to be focused upon is the suggestion that American strategy in Asia is underpinned by a relationship with Pakistan. The document, it is reported in THE NEW YORK TIMES, adds: with regard to Pakistan, a constructive U.S.-Pakistan military relationship will be an important element in our strategy to promote stable security conditions in Southwest Asia and Central Asia. Thus, the core issues are the recommendations regarding the use of military force against India in the context of weapons of mass destruction; and the equating of India with Iraq, North Korea, and Pakistan has been seen as objectionable and has naturally agitated many Indian quarters. The other aspect is that of ensuring American security interests by an enhanced military relationship with Pakistan by the Pentagon, and this would in effect turn the clock back to the kind of cold war polarities and [word indistinct], thereby eroding whatever modest advances have been made in the geopolitics of the region.

I aggressively used the word intriguing about the Pentagon report for two reasons. On the one hand, as students of recent international security affairs and American studies are well aware, very often the different organs of the U.S.A. are not aware of what the others are doing. That the State Department and the Pentagon are at cross surfaces or that the White House is doing its own thing was well documented in the context of the famous Colonel Oliver North and contra case. This is explained away as a case of loose cannons rolling on the deck. If that be the case, one may assume that this is another case of Pentagon and State operating two different frequencies. But, then here is the intriguing part, for it is not as if the Pentagon is not aware of India and the current level of dialogue that now obtain. In the recent past, we have had the American chief of naval operations, Admiral (Kelso), here, as also the U.S. commander in chief, Pacific, Admiral (Chuck Larson). More recently,

the air force commander in chief, Pacific, General Jimmy Adams, and Admiral Arthur just now. All these visits are supposed to enhance and deepen the tentative Indo-U.S. defense cooperation, and thus for the Pentagon to tacitly concur with such a report just now is very odd. While conceiving that military planners the world over have to prepare for all kinds of contingencies, one had assumed that India was being perceived a bit differently in Washington. That does not appear to be the case.

U.S. Says Pakistan Stockpiling Chemical Weapons

BK1803165392 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 17 Mar 92

[Text] According to a senior U.S. official, Pakistan continues its policy of acquiring chemical and biological weapons. The U.S. assistant secretary of state for politico-military affairs, Mr. Richard Clarke, said in Washington that despite worldwide concern during 1991 for nonproliferation, Pakistan is piling up its stock of mass destruction weapons. Mr. Clarke said the U.S. should take a strong step in this regard.

Libya Seeks Mediation on Pan Am Controversy

BK1903075092 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0730 GMT 19 Mar 92

[Text] Libya is seeking Indian mediation to resolve the controversy between Tripoli and Washington over the shooting down of two U.S. aircraft. The United States has charged Libyan nationals with masterminding the attack on two Pan Am aircraft in 1988.

External Affairs Ministry sources in New Delhi say the Libyan leadership is in touch with the Indian Embassy in New York to solicit New Delhi's good offices in resolving the contentious issue. The Libyan leadership also conveyed this to a high-level Indian political delegation which recently visited Tripoli to help strengthen bilateral ties. The Libyan leaders have been particularly acclaiming the Indian support to them when the U.S. threatened to impose economic sanctions against Libya if Tripoli did not handover the suspects behind the aircraft shooting to Washington for trial.

Tamil Nadu Chief Said Target of LTTE Hit Team

BK1903092692 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 19 Mar 92

[Text] The Tamil Nadu chief minister, Ms. Jayalalitha, has disclosed that an LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] suicide squad has landed in Tamil Nadu to kill her and blast the headquarters of the Special Investigation Team, SIT, in Madras' (Mallikai). Announcing this in the state assembly today, Ms. Jayalalitha said the squad's arrival has been confirmed by the Indian Army and the Tamil Nadu Police. She said its exact composition is not immediately known. However, the chief minister said the objective of the squad appears to be threefold: to assassinate her, rescue or liquidate the accused in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, and blast the headquarters of the SIT.

Militants Kill 16 in Punjab

BK1903063192 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 19 Mar 92

[Text] In Punjab, militants shot dead 16 persons and injured 20 others in Ludhiana last night. According to an official spokesman, two motorcycle-borne militants came to (Fieldsganj) locality and drove through adjoining streets firing at groups of people. The victims belong to both the major communities. The incident took place at 2000. The security forces all over the state have been alerted and a massive manhunt has been launched. This is the second big strike by the militants in Ludhiana City during the last five days. Last Saturday [14 March], militants shot dead 18 persons and injured six in Vishwakarma and Bhagwannagar localities.

Elsewhere in the state, eight militants have been killed in separate encounters with the security forces last night. According to an official spokesman, three militants were killed in Kapurthala District, two militants each in Faridkot and Amritsar Districts, and one in Gurdaspur. A large quanity of arms, ammunition, and explosives were recovered from their possession.

President Congratulates South Africa's de Klerk

BK1803161292 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Text] President Venkataraman has expressed happiness over the success of the referendum called by the South African president. In his message to Mr. de Klerk, Mr. Venkataraman expressed the hope that the political process will culminate in the establishment of democracy in South Africa based on the internationally-acknowledged principle of universal adult franchise.

The Janata Dal has congratulated the South African president on his massive victory in the referendum. Speaking to newsmen in New Delhi, a party spokesman hoped that this will clear the way for a peaceful transfer of power to the African majority.

Iran

Involvement in Israeli Embassy Blast Denied

LD1903142292 Tehran IRNA in English 1334 GMT 19 Mar 92

[Text] Tehran, March 19, IRNA—The embassy of the Islamic Republic in Buenos Aires today expressed condolences to the Argentine Government and nation on the loss of lives of innocent people in Tuesday's blast at the Israeli Embassy.

The embassy in a statement, categorically denied Iran's involvement in the car bombing which destroyed the embassy, killed several people and injured many others.

Following the incident, Zionist and imperialist circles have launched a vicious campaign to link Iran with the blast.

Deputy Minister Departs for Azerbaijan, Armenia

LD1703215792 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 2030 GMT 17 Mar 92

[Text] Va'ezi, deputy foreign minister for Europe and the United States, left for Azerbaijan and Armenia today, to continue the third phase of mediation between the two countries. He will meet all parties involved in the Karabakh problem and will study ways and means to implement the accords incorporated in the Tehran declaration, which was signed three days ago by special envoys of the Armenian and Azerbaijani Governments, and by Foreign Minister Velayati.

Velayati, UN Official Confer on Karabakh Issue

LD1703190392 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 17 Mar 92

[Text] Joseph Stephanides, representing the UN secretary general, met Foreign Minister Velayati today in Tehran. Mr. Stephanides conveyed a message from Mr. Butrus Ghali, the UN secretary general, to Mr. Velayati. He said that the secretary general is appreciative of the efforts of the Islamic Republic of Iran to mediate in the dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Karabakh, and that he hopes the Islamic Republic will continue its efforts in this regard. He added that the secretary general is also thankful to the Islamic Republic of Iran for its efforts regarding the Afghan problem.

Referring to measures adopted toward implementation of the clauses of Security Council Resolution 598, the UN secretary general's representative in Tehran said: The secretary general is fully committed to the full implementation of Resolution 598; he sees its implementation as being in the interests of the international community.

Mr. Velayati offered his thanks for the secretary general's message, and expressed the hope that the Islamic Republic of Iran will have the same close cooperation with the new UN secretary general it had with Javier Perez de Cuellar. Concerning the Karabakh dispute, the foreign minister said: The Islamic Republic of Iran attaches importance to the Karabakh problem, because it is a war between our neighbors. Moreover, tension in Karabakh can cause tension throughout the region.

Shevardnadze Offers To Join Karabakh Mediation

LD1703190692 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 17 Mar 92

[Text] In the days immediately after he become president of the Georgian State Council, Eduard Shevardnadze, in a message to Foreign Minister Velayati, referred to the longstanding ties between the two countries and his close personal ties with high-ranking officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran. He welcomed the initiative of the Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign minister in mediating between Azerbaijan and Armenia, with a view to resolving the Karabakh crisis.

He stressed the importance of good relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran. He declared that in view of his acquaintance and close relations with officials of the two republics of Azerbaijan and Armenia, he is ready to cooperate with the Islamic Republic of Iran to resolve the dispute.

Commentary Stresses Rights of Muslim Peoples

NC1703105692 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 4 March 92 p 14

[Commentary by A. Salah: "Three Issues, Three Points"]

[Excerpts] In this week's commentary, we intend to speak briefly about three topics which concern the world of Islam, and Muslims in general.

The first issue pertains to the Greek prime minister's visit to Tehran, and the plight of Greek Muslims and their religious freedom. A considerable number of Muslims live in Greece, which is a major responsibility for Greek Prime Minister Mitsotakis. Therefore, the present Greek Government should be more perceptive when stating the rights of Muslims. [passage omitted]

Unfortunately, when Islam is mentioned in Greece, minds inadvertently revert to the Ottoman Empire, which ruled Greece 400 years ago. Greece, the birthplace of Western culture and civilization, was under Ottoman rule for many years, and despite the problems the Ottoman rulers had in general, they ensured that the religious rights of the people were not jeopardized. [passage omitted]

Today, the Greek Muslim minority is deprived of most of its rights to practice its religion, and of the support of Islamic countries, as they are far removed from the eyes of the world's Muslims. The Greek Government remarked on the laicist Turkish regime's attitude to the Muslims this way: "Turkey is not interested in the vindication of the rights of the Greek Muslims, but merely wishes to use them to gain a foothold in Greece. We do not know if they are Turks. We only recognize their rights officially as the Muslim minority."

Unfortunately, in this tussle, Turkey acts on the basis of its laicist and nationalistic attitude, which gives the Greek Government an opportunity to shrug off its responsibility to its Muslims and to renege on its promises.

What is important in this regard is that the rights of the Greek Muslims should be awarded on the basis of international norms and laws, as it appears that Greek Muslims are coming under added pressure by being

caught in this protracted crossfire between the Turkish and Greek Governments and are experiencing great hardship daily. In any case, the Muslims of the world expect the Greek Government to fulfill its promises regarding Greek Muslims as soon as possible and to assist them in attaining their true rights.

The second issue which has attracted the attention of the world's Muslims is the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict and the massacre of the Muslims of Nagorno-Karabakh. These two newly independent countries, which had been under communist rule for many years, are functioning with weak government organizations, which lack political experience and have therefore become enmeshed in complicated international plots. These two republics and their ruling parties are under the influence of international patterns and leanings, and are pursuing distinctive affiliations.

The Armenian Government, being Christian, is leaning more toward the West and enjoys its support; while the Azerbaijani Government is getting support from the laicist Turkish regime. But since the West is supporting Armenia, naturally the Turkish regime cannot act on its own nationalistic wishes, as it is also a NATO member and Western ally.

The Muslims of Azerbaijan therefore continue to burn in the crucible of the fire of sedition ignited by the West. Iran, meanwhile, as an Islamic country in whose neighborhood there is sedition and bloodshed, stepped in as a mediator. But the events of the past few days indicate that neither the West nor the church, nor even Turkey, are inclined to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh issue.

The stance of the Western press and their analyses of the issue prove that the West plans to create another Israel in the Caucasus, and, to quote the Western press: "Armenia should not be ignored, as the Armenians are the progeny of the heroic Christians of the East."

The third issue is the question of Turkish Kurdistan. The Turkish Government claims that the Kurdish people and guerrillas are preparing for a general uprising next month, and it is preparing for an overall offensive against the Kurdish-inhabited provinces and genocide against the Kurds.

It appears that last week, during his visit to the United States, Demirel elicited the White House's tacit consent for an extensive attack on Turkish Kurdistan and northern Iraq. Even though the massacre of the Kurds is not the appropriate course of action for the West, it concurred in view of its own long-term interests.

In any case, these three issues not only demand serious appraisal by Iranian officials, but also the vigilance of Muslims all over the world. If we are slow in taking action, history will never forgive us.

Turkey, India Said To Cooperate in Central Asia

NC1903121992 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Turkish 1630 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Text] India and Turkey are cooperating to oppose the increase of radical Islam in the Central Asian republics. The Indian Ministry of Foreign Affairs disclosed yesterday that during the recent visit of a high-ranking Turkish Foreign Ministry official to New Delhi, the two countries reached an agreement to cooperate in spreading profanity in Cental Asia. An Indian Foreign Ministry spokesman said that Turkey and India are opposed to religious activities in the Central Asian republics, and that they believe that the current situation has created an opportunity for them to cooperate to realize their common objectives.

Majles Speaker Urges Fairness in Elections

LD1803094892 Tehran IRNA in English 1618 GMT 17 Mar 92

[Text] Tehran, March 17, IRNA—The Council of Guardians should notice its crucial and sensitive responsibility towards the fourth parliamentary elections, and not take side with any particular faction, Majles Speaker Hojjat ol-Eslam Mehdi Karrubi warned here today.

Speaking at the last session of the Majles in the current year (the new Iranian year starts Friday), he said if the council and those monitoring the elections favor a particular faction, "we will fullfil our duty, and talk explicitly to the leadership and the people."

The criteria and regulations should be applied to all the candidates equally during the elections, due to be held on 10 April, he added.

Karrubi said officials in charge of the elections should keep their neutrality, and prepare the necessary grounds for the active presence of the people in the voting.

He also expressed hope that the elections would be held in a calm atmosphere without any tension, to enable the Iranian people to once again show their all-out presence for defending the ideals of the Islamic revolution.

The deadline for registration of the Majles candidates ended this afternoon and according to the Interior Ministry's electoral hqs. A total of 2,700 candidates have signed up to run in the fourth round of the elections throughout Iran.

At least 31 of the applicants are women with higher education degrees (M.A. and B.A.) and 17 from religious minorities according to the hqs.

In the second round of the Majles 1,100 applicants and in the third round 1,960 had signed up. Each Majles term is four years.

The rise in the number of the applicants for the fourth round indicates the interest of eligible people for deputyship, noted the electoral hqs.

The executive committees will examine eligibility of the applicants and the results will be announced on April 2 when the election campaign will start.

The people will cast their ballot in the boxes arranged by the electoral hqs. Across the country and all Iranians being 15-years old and more are allowed to take part in the election for the 270-seat Majles.

[Tehran IRNA in English at 0734 GMT on 18 March adds: "By the end of the week-long registration period Tuesday night, a total of 2,876 candidates filed applications with the Interior Ministry to run in the elections for the fourth term of the Majles.

[However, the total figure is expected to exceed [words indistinct] in Tehran, 292 have applied. Of the total, 52 are women and 21 from the four main religious minorities.

[Zoroastrians, Jews and Assyrian Christians from throughout Iran and the Armenian Christians from northern Iran will vote in Tehran constituency. However, the Armenians from southern Iran will vote in Esfahan constituency.

[The nationwide Majles elections are to be held April 10 for the election of 270 deputies.

[Eligibility of the applicants will be studied by a special team at the Interior Ministry and the final approval will be made by the Guardians Council. The results will be known by April 2 when the election campaign are to be launched."]

Executive Committees Begin Review of Candidates

LD1903001992 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 2030 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Text] On Wednesday, executive committees across the country began a review of the competence of the candidates for the fourth Islamic Consultative Assembly [Majles] election.

During the seven days of the legal registration period for the fourth Majles session, 3,240 candidates registered in 196 constituencies by the end of office hours on Tuesday, 17 March. The number of candidates increased by 1,200 compared to the third session elections, and doubled compared to the second session elections.

In the fourth Majles elections, 55 women are candidates. The number of candidates from religious minorities in this session is 25, an increase of some 40 percent compared with the second and third Majles sessions.

A review of the competence of the candidates will continue for five days, until Sunday, 22 March.

Editorial Urges 'Spirituality' in Elections

NC1503204492 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 4 Mar 92 pp 1, 14

[Editorial: "Elections and Spirituality"]

[Excerpts] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. A week after the auspicious month of Ramadan, which begins this Friday, elections to the fourth term of the Majles will begin. Canvassing for the elections will take place in the week between Ramadan and the actual polling. It is expected that the campaign will take place in an atmosphere replete with a sense of spirituality, and this in itself should ensure the wholesomeness of the elections. [passage omitted]

One who wishes to register his name as a candidate for the position of Majles deputy should indulge in some introspection and ask himself whether he will be a valuable element in the Majles, or if he wants to enter the Majles merely to satisfy his base desires. [passage omitted]

A point worth noting is that Iran is the proponent of spirituality and humanitarianism, and this should assist us in paying greater attention to our obligations in this regard. The world today is at such a level of material progress that it will take many years for us to reach that point. What is certain is that we should make the effort to reach that level, and if we do so we are sure to succeed materially.

At this point, when we are still at a great distance from that level and there are nations that are far ahead of us in material advancement, we have nothing to exult over but our spirituality. On the basis of this spirituality we stress the aspirations of Iran's system. [passage omitted]

If the officials who are conducting the campaign and the candidates and relevant factions enter the foray with this state of mind, naturally the people will also be motivated to participate in the elections extensively. Such elections will befit Iran's system and the auspicious month of Ramadan is a suitable opportunity to synchronize our aspirations with our actions. May Almighty God give us this ability.

Foreign Ministry Denies Expelling Swede

LD1803155492 Tehran IRNA in English 1452 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Text] Tehran, March 18, IRNA—The Foreign Ministry today denied reports on the expulsion of a Swedish diplomat from Iran.

An informed source at the ministry termed the reports "not simply true", [as received] and said that none of the Swedish diplomats have been ordered to leave Iran.

A Tehran-based morning daily reported on Tuesday that second secretary at the Swedish Embassy in Tehran Bjorn Larsson had been declared "persona non grata" and ordered to leave Iran.

The Swedish Government also denied reports on the expulsion of one of its diplomats from Iran.

Visa Exemption Treaty With Japan 'Suspended'

LD1703105592 Tehran IRNA in English 0954 GMT 17 Mar 92

[Text] Tehran, March 17, IRNA—The Iranian Government has temporarily suspended the 1974 bilateral visa exemption treaty with Japan as of April 15. The move comes after refusal of entry to thousands of Iranians by the Japanese immigration officials at Narita International Airport, mistreatment of Iranian new arrivals by Narita immigration officials, deportation of Iranians from Japan and unfair labor practices by Japanese employers. The Iranian Government's measure is in a bid to protect the rights of its citizens.

Under the 1974 agreement citizens of both the countries could travel to the other country and stay there for three months with no visa requirement.

In the past two years many Iranians have been expelled from Japan with their money confiscated. Meanwhile, a large number of Iranians charged with minor offenses have been kept in custody for long periods of time. Moreover, in certain instances the Iranians working in Japan are paid less and receive no compensation in case of vocational accidents. The situation is aggravated by occasional attack of the Japanese racist groups on Iranians and the cruelty of Japanese police.

'Disputes' Between Tehran, Central Bank Detailed

NC1503104692 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 3 Mar 92 p 2

[Editorial: "Government Branches Should Be Harmonized"]

[Text] Disputes between the Tehran municipality and the Central Bank has been taking on ever greater dimensions during the past month.

The Central Bank has opposed the municipality's proposed scheme of absorbing the surplus liquidity in the community to finance housing projects. According to the Central Bank authorities the 25 percent interest rate the municipality proposes to pay for the people's savings would disrupt the national monetary system, and could have disastrous consequences for the entire banking system. It should be noted that 13 percent is the maximum interest rate paid by the banks on long-term savings.

We do not intend to arbitrate here between the two disputants or to pass judgment on who is in the right. There is no doubt that the municipality under the management of Mr. Karbaschi has done a great deal in the past two years to change the face of the capital. In fact the mayor may be regarded as one of the most successful managers in the country, and apart from his duties in the municipality, he has even helped other organizations which lacked the necessary financial resources and technical equipments. Among such supplementary measures must be counted the creation of numerous gymnasiums and cultural centers throughout the city.

All of this is of course deserving of praise, and it should also be conceded that housing is a great problem in the capital as elsewhere in the country. It is also true that housing is among the areas in which we are lagging behind the 5-year development plan. In an interview with TEHRAN TIMES, the Plan and Budget minister stated that as against the projected 22 and ½ percent rate of growth in the housing construction, the actual rate of growth has not gone beyond 1.7 percent.

Still it has to be conceded that mass production of homes is outside the functions of municipality, and certainly a 25 percent rate of interest could accelerate the inflationary trend.

Undoubtedly the issue requires a thorough survey by qualified experts. At the moment both sides of the disputes are being hasty in giving out their respective announcements. Such differences among government organs, which should harmonize their effort to find solutions for the problems faced by the majority of the people, will only result in the erosion of the base of the popular trust in the government.

We believe President Hashemi-Rafsanjani should personally intervene and settle the dispute before it has turned into a serious source of instability for the executive branch.

'No Changes' in Foreign Exchange Policies Planned

LD1603160892 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GNT 15 Mar 92

[Excerpts] With the implementation of the the new taxation laws, all revenues from agriculture, animal husbandry, fish breeding, poultry farming, bee keeping, reclamation of pasture land and forests, fishing, and silkworm breeding will be exempted from taxes for an unspecified period of time.

Mr. Nurbakhsh, minister of economy and finance, announced this in an interview with reporters today. [passage omitted]

In connection with the budget for the year ending 20 March 1992, Mr. Nurbakhsh said:

[Begin recording] [Nurbakhsh] Fortunately, the financial year will end as was envisaged in the budget law—we have no need for any supplements to the budget. The level of bank credits will be the same as that envisaged in the law, which means that we have been able to maintain

the budget deficit at the level set by the law for another year. This is a substantial step from the point of view of the reform of the government's financial system.

[Unidentified correspondent] It is said that the government's foreign exchange policies are going to change. Is this correct? If so, can this change be announced or not?

[Nurbakhsh] As has been announced, there are no changes whatsoever in foreign exchange policies. The trend of these policies is clear and has been announced, and anything different from what has been announced—any other rumors in this connection—can be refuted. Economic activities involving foreign exchange will continue in the year beginning 21 March 1992, within the framework of the existing policies and trends, which will not change.

[Correspondent] Thank you very much. [end recording]

New Tax Law 'Anti-Inflationary'

LD1603142392 Tehran IRNA in English 1013 GMT 16 Mar 92

[Text] March 16, IRNA—The new law on direct taxes is anti-inflationary and will boost production, said Minister of Economy and Financial Affairs Mohsen Nurbakhsh here Sunday.

The minister told reporters that the new law on direct taxes, subsidies and foreign exchange policies has been approved by the Majles and will come into effect as of the next Iranian calendar year, March 21, after final endorsement by the Guardians Council. Under the new regulations there are nine classifications.

Furthermore the annual income of up to 300 million rials is tax exempted and a 54 percent tax will be levied on the excess income. However, under the previous law the limit was 25 million rials and the taxation on the additional income was 75 percent.

An amendment to the 1988 law on direct taxes has also exempted establishment of industrial townships as well as estates owned by cultural, educational, sport and medical centers, hotels and hostels from taxation.

The minister said that the industrial exports will enjoy a 50-100 percent tax exemption.

As for the taxes on heritage, the deposits with the banks of the deceased will be exempted from taxation as well as 50 percent of the deceased's shares in the companies accepted at the stock market and 40 percent of the persons shares in companies, the minister added.

On the current year's budget, Nurbakhsh said that the budget deficit was exactly as was envisaged in this year's budget bill and hoped that the next year's deficit will also be according to the plan. He noted that the subsidies for essential commodities have been fully paid up and that there will be no drastic change in the rate of foreign currencies.

Khorasan Company Sets Up Office in Turkmenistan

LD1603091292 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0730 GMT 15 Mar 92

[Text] An office representing Khorasan Province's Heavy Industries Supply and Support Company has been set up in the Turkmenistan Republic, and has started industrial and commercial activities in that republic. This is for technical, industrial, and commercial cooperation as well as to export part of Khorasan's heavy industrial products to the Republic of Turkmenistan.

The Khorasan Heavy Industries Supply and Support Company, which covers about 400 production and industrial units in that province, is able to acquire part of the required raw materials by units under its coverage by exporting part of its heavy industrial products.

* Government Buys Brazilian Mining Technology

92SM0290Y Sao Paulo GAZETA MERCANTIL in Portuguese 12 Feb 92 p 10

[By Cristina Borges]

[Text] Rio-The Inga Commercial and Industrial Company yesterday signed a contract for the sale of technology for the utilization of silicated or oxidized zinc ore to the Government of Iran. Under the contract, in addition to supplying technology, the Brazilian company will provide engineering services and personnel training valued at $11.35 million.

The contract was signed in Teheran between Inga President Flavio Barreto and the Iranian Ministry of Mines and Metals. It will remain in force for three years, which is the estimated time required for the processing plant to go into operation, with a production capacity of 50,000 tons per year. "The negotiations with Iran have opened up new opportunities for Brazilian companies that are investing in technology," says Flavio Barreto's brother Gilberto Barreto, who is vice president of Kiba, the holding company that controls Inga.

The sale of the technology had its origin four years ago in the purchase by the Inga Company of silicated zinc from Iran, that was extracted from a reserve which had recently begun to be exploited. Inga developed its technology in the last part of the 1950's, and subsequently perfected it. Inga was first in the world to develop the process for concentration of silicated or oxidated zinc ore, which is patented in 14 countries for the production of ingots.

The usual technique for obtaining the metal is based on sulfated zinc ore, which has sulfur in its composition. "It is the first time that the Inga Company has sold its technology abroad, thereby definitively ending past disputes over control of the process developed by the company, which competes in the international market," Gilberto Barreto said.

Iran will build its first zinc processing plant in the city of Dandi, Zanjan Province, and will be responsible for developing the infrastructure and for constructing and equipping the plant. The Inga Company will be responsible for supervising the work, and will train 25 Iranian technicians at its plant in Itaguai, Rio de Janeiro. Barreto added that the Government of Iran is interested in becoming self-sufficient in production of the metal and control of the technological process, because it is the exclusive producer of oxidated or silicated "Anguran" zinc ores.

The Inga Company—which was founded in 1949 as a manufacturer of galvanized pipe—today has a production of 42,000 tons per year. The company has diversified its activities in the areas of zinc mining, zinc oxide, and powdered zinc. The plant at Itaguai is carrying out a project to expand its production capacity to 54,000 tons per year. In 1991 the company's total sales corresponded to $60,000 [as published].

According to Barreto, the Inga Company's strategy is aimed at internationalizing its operations, so that an average of 25 percent of its output will be destined for export even in periods when its entire production could be absorbed on the domestic market. At the present time, the company's exports represent 40 percent of its total production, as a consequence of Brazil's economic recession, whose effects on domestic demand began to be felt in October 1990.

Pakistan

Spokesman Denies Delhi Report on Chemical Weapons

BK1803165592 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1600 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Text] Pakistan has denied in categorical terms that it is engaged in acquiring chemical or biological weapons. A Foreign Office spokesman commenting on a news item broadcast by All India Radio yesterday described the news as totally baseless and unfounded. He said in fact Pakistan itself has taken a number of initiatives to ensure that South Asia remains free of all nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. He referred to the prime minister's proposal of June last year to this effect and said Pakistan continues to follow the policy of taking all steps to prohibit all weapons of mass destruction in South Asia.

Minister Hails Najibollah's Intent To Step Down

BK1903115292 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 19 Mar 92

[Text] Pakistan has described as positive development Mr. Najibollah's readiness to step down as head of the Kabul regime as soon as an Islamic interim government is formed through the United Nations process. Addressing a news conference in Islamabad today, the minister of state for foreign affairs, Mr. Mohammad Siddique Khan Kanjoo, said the move would greatly facilitate the process aimed at transfer of power in Afghanistan to an Islamic interim government.

He said the announcement fully vindicates the policy of the Pakistani Government to firmly support the UN secretary general's proposal for convening a representative Afghan assembly to determine an Islamic interim government. The announcement serves to satisfy all those mojahedin groups who desired adequate assurances to the effect that an Islamic interim government formed through the UN process would replace the present Kabul regime. He urged all mojahedin organizations and patriotic Afghans to cooperate for the expeditious implementation of the UN initiative which provides for best hope for an early settlement of the problem, restores the Islamic character of Afghanistan, and ensures respect for its independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.

The minister of state underscored the need for a peaceful and stable Afghanistan which, he said, is in the vital interest of the region that includes Pakistan, Iran and the newly-independent Central Asian states.

UN Resolutions 'Only' Solution for Kashmir

BK1703030092 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 17 Mar 92

[Text] Federal Industries Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed has said that the only practical solution to the Kashmir issue is to implement the UN resolutions. In an interview with a group of Indian journalists in Islamabad yesterday, he said that Pakistan's position on the Kashmir issue is very clear. Instead of being engaged in a war of words, both Pakistan and India can and should utilize their resources for the welfare of their people. The federal minister said that Pakistan does not want a war with India. The two countries should resolve the Kashmir issue through peaceful negotiations, and this is possible only when India implements the UN resolutions on Kashmir, he added. In reply to a question, the federal minister said that Pakistan is trying to draw the attention of the world, and organizations like Amnesty International, to the atrocities being perpetuated by Indian forces and the plight of the Kashmiri people, who have been persistently subjected to violence and brutal activities.

European Parliament Resolution Hailed

BK1803155092 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 18 Mar 92

[Text] Pakistan has welcomed the resolution adopted by the European Parliament, describing it as a very significant event. A Foreign Office spokesman told newsmen in Islamabad today that the resolution reflects the international community's increasing political and moral pressure on India to make it agree to a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir problem and provide an opportunity to the Kashmiri people to decide their future freely in accordance with the UN Security Council [UNSC]

resolutions. The spokesman said the European Parliament's resolution has recognized the right of self- determination of the Kashmiri people and urged the UNSC to review the Kashmir situation once again. It has also asked India to allow the international agencies to visit occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Answering a question, the spokesman said Pakistan will continue to provide its political, moral, and diplomatic support to the Kashmiri people's struggle, besides trying to highlight the current situation in Kashmir at different international organizations and forums. He said Pakistan will welcome every positive response from India, which will enable the two countries to reduce their forces along their borders and the Line of Control.

About the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front's [JKLF] planned march to cross the Line of Control in Kashmir on 30 March, the spokesman said the government is in touch with the JKLF so as to prevent the JKLF leadership from translating their plans into action.

National People's Party Ousted From Alliance

BK1903055792 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 19 Mar 92

[Text] The Islami Jamhoori Ittehad [IJI] has, not surprisingly, decided to expel from the alliance the National People's Party headed by Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi. ASSOCIATED PRESS OF PAKISTAN, quoting informed sources, has said the decision was taken after IJI President Mohammad Nawaz Sharif's consultations with other parties in the alliance. The prime minister's decision to expel the National People's Party from the IJI was taken after many days of consultations with various parties of the alliance, including the Pakistan Muslim League.

Many leaders of the Pakistan Muslim League—including federal ministers Abdul Sattar Lalika, Anwar Saifullah Khan, Jan Mohammad Yusuf, and Ghulam Dastagir Khan; Minister of State Mohammad Siddique Kanjoo; Balochistan Minister Sayeed Hashmi; and senators and members of the National Assembly—have commended the decision. In a statement issued in Islamabad last night, they described the decision as timely and a step in the right direction. They said the decision to expel the National People's Party from the IJI will be welcomed by all patriotic citizens, and the IJI will be further strengthened.